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OCTOBER 1996

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# WIZARD®

Number 62
OCTOBER 1996

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*Sweet Petunia in a birch bark canoe! This is your only chance to get the awesome Astro City #1/2 comic by that swell team of Kurt Busiek and Brent Anderson. If you haven't been reading this series, here's your chance to jump on. And if you have been reading it, well, you don't need us to tell you that it's one of the finest comics on the market today.*

"CAR KEYS? NOPE. ROLL OF QUARTERS? NAH...AHH! THERE'S MY HAM AND CHEESE ON RYE..."

## CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

I'm back from the San Diego ComicCon where I had a great time. Just to recap some of the highlights from my trip: 1) Two rounds of golf—one with Jim Lee, his wife and Brandon Choi, the second with Marc Silvestri and Mike Turner (I beat them all—in score). I do, however, owe Jim $10 because I lost a side bet. 2) I went with a whole group of people (including Joe Quesada, Jimmy Palmiotti, Jon Rheingold from Harris, the *Wizard* crew and many others) to the opening of "ID4." 3) The next night, Brian Cunningham, Andrew Kardon and I went to dinner with Mark Hamill, courtesy of Dark Horse. He does the greatest impressions of people and was lots of fun. 4) *Wizard* hosted a pool party (as in billiards) with lots of people from the industry including: Todd McFarlane, Rob Liefeld, Jim Lee, Marc Silvestri, Joe Q., Jimmy P., Amanda Conner, Joe Jusko and many more. 5) I went to an all-night poker game with the likes of Jim Lee, Jeph Loeb, Mike Turner, David Wohl, Nick, Terry Fitzgerald, Art Adams, Scott Dunbier (art broker extraordinaire) and Matt Hawkins. I'll just say one thing—better luck next time, guys...

Oh, by the way, I did have a great time at the actual ComicCon. Got to see and hang out with lots and lots of people—Billy Tucci, James Robinson, Kurt Busiek and many other great talents.

This month in *Wizard*, we've got some great features—including our cover story on why the Spawn/Spider-Man crossover is one that *must* be made. We've also got an awesome die-cut chromium Spider-Man card, and an incredible *Astro City* #1/2 offer—one of the best titles in comics today. Make sure you send in the coupon. You know *Astro City* back issues are gonna soar.

I know you'll love this issue as much as I do!

See ya,

Gareb S. Shamus


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**Stuff you don't ever read...**

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# MAGIC WORDS

## Open Mouth, Insert Foot

**I thought it was just a random comment with no possible repercussions when I referred to Wolverine as "the most overrated runt in comics" a few issues ago. I mean, who would care? The guy doesn't even have a nose anymore, fer cryin' out loud!**

**Well, a lot of readers seemed to care. I got a lot of mail telling me I was a bad man for cappin' on poor ol' Wolvie. I also got a lot of mail agreeing with the "overrated" sentiment. We'll lead off this month with a sample of each, and then get into a few of our 53 million "Onslaught" letters. Enjoy.**

**Dear Mr. McLauchlin,**

In "Magic Words" in issue #58, you said that Wolverine was "the most overrated runt in comics." Now, I am not a big fan of Wolvie's, but I think that if you went up against him, you would give a little more respect to the guy. What do you think?

Also, I just got in a fight with this loser brat from school. She said that I am too pretty to read comics and that I am going to end up looking like my older sister. This was such a major insult to me that I could only respond with, "Shut up, you goody-goody butt-head." Ever since then I have been trying to get a good comeback and have so far been unsuccessful. Could you find it in your heart to help me out?

**Laura E. Novacek**
**Rosemount, MN**

***I think (in fact, I know) that Wolverine is a fictional character and I could, therefore, not go up against him. So earning my respect in that manner is out of the question.***

***As to a comeback for the loser brat from school, my standard when I can't think of anything else is usually "Up your ass with Mobil gas." But in this instance, we have to get a bit more specific. So I'd try, "Oh yeah? Well, you're so ugly, they have to tie meat around your neck to get the dog to play with you." That one always works.***

***And remember: You can never truly be too pretty to read comics. Just look at me.***

**Dear Wizard,**

I am writing because of what you said about Wolverine in issue #58. You said that Wolverine was "the most overrated runt in comics." I totally agree with you. Wolverine is so sucky. I don't know why everyone thinks he is so cool. Maybe he wouldn't suck so much if he weren't so overexposed. What makes this even worse is that Wolverine's presence means that good comics like *The New Warriors* that have great stories and great art are not being bought because they don't have a huge "X" plastered on the cover. It's because of comics like *Wolverine* and other X-books that other comics aren't given much of a chance.

**Seth Spence**
**Slaughters, KY**

***It's true that Wolvie may be the most exposed comic character going today. It's also true that the X-books do have a huge market presence. But I would not say that Wolverine's exposure is harmful to other comic titles. Ultimately, any book will stand or fall on its own merit and many books (f'r instance Strangers in Paradise, Cerebus, Stray Bullets and Bone) have come out of nowhere to become pretty darned popular in their own right.***

***Oh, by the way—I also would not say that New Warriors is anything that could be termed "great."***

**Dear Wizard,**

I can't believe that readers believe that Onslaught is actually Professor X, as was shown in *X-Men* #54. I really believe that Onslaught is the Changeling.

Just look at all the clues. In *X-Men* #53 (2nd series) there is a mention of the alien Z'Nox invasion. This is also mentioned in the previous issue of *X-Men* and in *Uncanny X-Men* #334. Also in *Uncanny* #334, Scott

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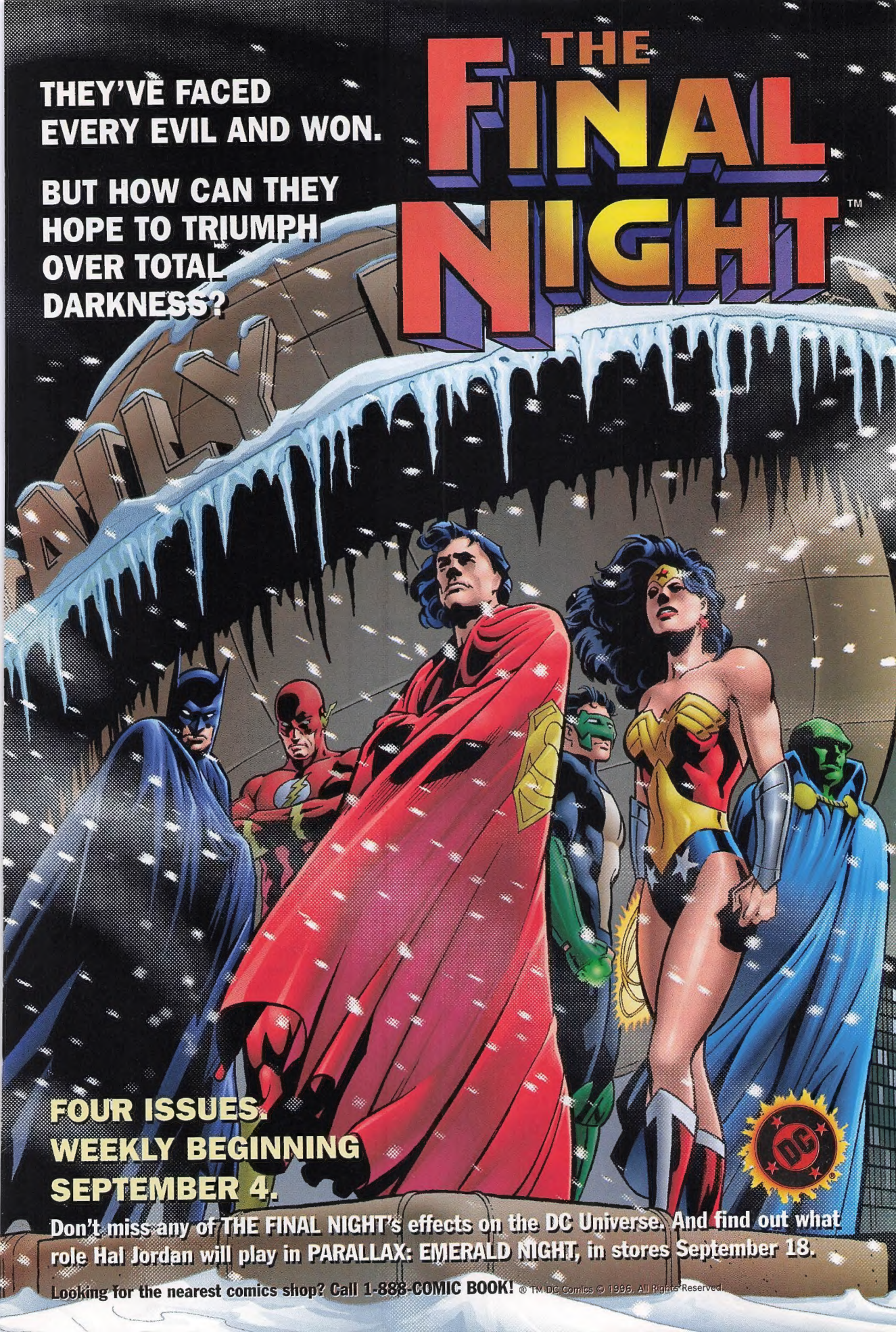
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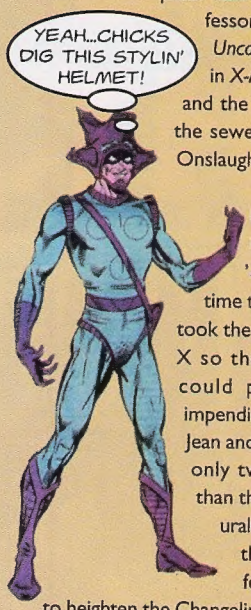
is given a speech by someone that appears to be the Professor warning him of what is coming and telling him that he is a former mentor. At the time, the computer tells Scott that the Professor is in the study. In *Uncanny* #334 as well as in *X-Men* #54, Jean Grey and the Juggernaut go into the sewers to find clues to Onslaught's identity.




Now, if you look back to the X-Men books of the '60s, there was a time that the Changeling took the place of Professor X so that the Professor could prepare for the impending Z'Nox invasion. Jean and the Prof were the only two people (other than the Changeling, naturally) that knew about this. Both the Professor and Jean had to heighten the Changeling's psychic awareness and implant some of the Professor's memories so that he could fool the X-Men and other psychics. The Changeling was later killed—in the sewers—by a mutant named Grotesk. This explains Jean and Juggy's visit to the sewers. When the Changeling "died," he was still in the form of the Professor. I think that Changeling never died and his near-death experience traumatized him so badly that he may have retained the memories given to him by the Professor. Having two sets of memories—Changeling's and the Prof's—drove him over the edge and forced him to find a new identity, that of...ONSLAUGHT!

Both sets of memories would explain Onslaught's animosity towards the Juggernaut (X's stepbrother) and his wanting to shatter Jean's trust of the Prof by showing her his deepest secret. Onslaught spent so much time working on healing his mind and body that he brought his mind to a new height on the psychic plane, explaining his psychic powers as well as his ability to look like the Professor.

Another clue is the fact that the Blob and the Mimic are working for Onslaught. Both of these villains worked with the Changeling in the mutant group Factor 3.

I urge all X-Men readers not to be fooled by *X-Men* #54. Onslaught is not Professor X. Onslaught is the Changeling!

**Jon Vine**
**Merritt Island, FL**

***Hey! Now that's quite the interesting theory and quite the bit of research. Could it be right? Could Marvel be funnin' with us and throwing Chuck Xavier out there as a red herring?***

***Nah. We got the straight poop right from Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras: "It's a good theory and a very cool idea that I wish we would have thought of. But unfortunately, that's not the way it is. Still, Jon really did his homework and he can consider himself the winner of an honorary Marvel No-Prize."***

**Dear Wizardites,**

I seem to recollect that the bloodthirsty vixen Vampirella used to have a black tattoo of a bat on her left breast when her adventures were published by Warren Publications. What happened to this mark? Did she have it surgically removed before her hop to Harris Comics, or am I hallucinating the whole memory? Please update us. Was this overlooked or omitted for some reason?

**Ronnie Doyle**
**Oak Harbor, WA**

***According to Harris Comics' Stewart Morales, the Harris Vampirella has no tattoo. But in the recent Vampirella vs. The Eudaemon Special Edition, longtime Vampi artist Rudy Nebres (whose artistic abilities are truly amazing) got back in that place by giving her a temporary black bat tattoo.***

**Dear Wizard,**

I previously sent you a letter about Havok being the X-Traitor. Anyway, please don't put it in your magazine! I was wrong! You probably wouldn't have done it anyway, but please don't! Thank you!

**Julian Staros**
**Ellicott City, MD**

***Okay. No problem.***

**Dear Wizard,**

Back in your Jerry Siegel obituary in *Wizard* #57, you stated that the Superman co-creator was born in 1917. But in the DC ad in the same issue, it says that he was born in 1914. Who's right?

**Andrew McCash**
**Burr Ridge, IL**

***We screwed up. For the record, Jerry***

# THE BUNNY AWARD

be afraid

Paul Schiraldi

Jim takes one of his favorite letters of the month and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this nor is there a prize.

**Dear Wizard,**

I have an automotive problem. I've got an AsphaltSkipper Model 45 with Infinite Cyclodrive rated at 4500 BTU. The RAMshere's cranked to about 3.2 GAEs on the Escher scale and I'm getting about 9:1 on the Tsunomometer. My question is this: If I ramp up the protodrive to a full 256 SKU, how much additional Saganium will I need to reach the event horizon?

**Clint Tremper**
**Creedd@aol.com**

***Since the event horizon perpetually moves away from you at the same speed at which you approach it, additional Saganium won't help. Try dialing the RAMshere down to where it's hitting -0.53 on the Escher scale. Alternately, you could try putting a double deckle-edge whisker basket on your gasprometer to get more TLA. If that doesn't work, just get yourself a '67 Pontiac GTO, hammer that sucker down and fly!***

***Siegel was born in 1914. We apologize for the error.***

**Dear Wizard,**

I have an interesting card that I can't catalog. In a freebie two-card Fleer Ultra pack that came in an issue of *Wolverine*, I got an "Alternate X" Weapon X card. I was wondering how much this card is worth, as it is not included in your lovely price guide. If you could find out, I would go out and buy twice my weight in *Wizards*, I swear it! Thank you.

**Patty Storsved**
**Mandan, ND**

***In the December, 1994-shipping X-Men books, Fleer inserted two-card Ultra X-Men '95 sample packs. One in every eight books had the Weapon X Wolvie, which is not part of the regular set. When sold, it usually goes for about $5 to $10.***

***Twice your weight in Wizards? Now that we've found out, I hope you're really heavy.***

**Dear Wizard,**

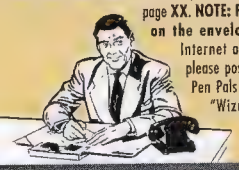
I've noticed something that really annoys me. Your magazine always talks about how the latest comics by the most popular creators are being snatched up so quickly...and about how you get all these reports of people wanting more. In observing these "new" creators that pop up, I've realized how much fans have overlooked their past work. For instance, look at Garth Ennis' work on *Hellblazer* and *The Demon*, or all the different things Mark Waid did for DC years before either of them came into fame. I've bought a lot of quality books by these great writers and practically all of it was at cover price. My point being: Before anyone goes out splurging on a comic by the "newest" popular writer or artist, they should save themselves some money by finding some good, cheap back issues by the same people.

**Frank Turbe**
**Yorktown Heights, NY**

***Point taken. If you dig Ennis on* Preacher**

## Hey! It's Pen Pals

Meet your fellow comic fans! Send your name, address, age, gender and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the Magic Words address on page XX. **NOTE: Please write your age on the envelope.** If you want your Internet address listed instead, please post your info in the new Pen Pals message board on our "Wizard World" forum on America Online. Hey, make a friend!



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33659 Lyncroft
Farmington Heights, MI 48331
Likes: *The Maxx*, Vertigo titles, *Glory*

*or* Hitman, *chances are you'll also love his stuff on* Hellblazer *and* The Demon. *Similarly, fans of Waid on* Captain America *or* Kingdom Come *may want to check out his work on a 10-page backup story in* Justice League Quarterly #10 *(which Waid describes as "the best story I ever did") or in Archie Comics'* Veronica Goes to Rome *(we're not kidding). And yes, you will save yourself a few bucks in the process. That Veronica book is particularly cheap.*

**Dear Jim,**
Are comics a financially stable job? I'm 15 years old and I need to know so I'll be ready for what waits ahead.

**Shawn Newton**
**Hot Springs, AR**

*Comic professions can be very lucrative—or they can make you a pauper. On the publishing end, entry-level positions as, say, an assistant editor at a comic company usually start you out at around $20,000 yearly, which ain't a lot of scratch. On the other hand, big kahuna publishers or senior editors can easily earn six figures, but you usually have to put in many years of service to reach that level.*

*Creatively, most writers and artists barely make squat when they start out. However, big names command big bucks. Once you're established as a top-flight creator, you can make a very comfortable living. Possessors of top creator-owned properties, like several of those Image guys, are easily generating revenues that reach into the million-dollar zone every year.*

*Ya rolls the dice and ya takes yer chances.*

**Dear Wizard,**
I have a question for you. What happened to Greg Capullo's "Krash Course"? I liked that column a lot. Now you've got "Basic Training," which I like too, but not as much.

**Matthew Bond**
**Poplar Point, Manitoba, Canada**

*We decided to evolve our art column into the form that is now "Basic Training" so that we could focus on many different aspects of comic art and play to the particular strength of a different artist every month. That's why you've seen the likes of Jimmy Palmiotti on inking and Jim Balent on drawing women—these guys are artists who are well known for their abilities in these areas. In future months, look for Kelley Jones on setting a dark 'n' spooky mood and Norm Breyfogle on laying out a comic page. And as usual, your recommendations are always welcome.*

**To Wizard,**
I am curious as to why Alex Ross hasn't put any effort into a character of his own. With the great job he does and the great depth that he shows in other heroes, he could escalate one of his own into the realm of greatness.

**Petey Atkinson**
**Ft. Bragg, NC**

*Alex Ross has actually put a fair amount of effort into characters of his own, as he co-created all the* Astro City *characters along with Kurt Busiek. Alex also points out that no less significant than the tights-wearing crowd are some of the human characters he helped create, such as Phil Sheldon in* Marvels *and Norman McCay in* Kingdom Come.

**Dear Wizard,**
Are the folks at Fireman Press ever going to team up with a toy company to make *Scud: The Disposable Assassin* toys?

**Brian Nelson**
**Gresham, OR**

*We called* Scud *creator Rob Schrab and he said, "We would love to do that, but it would have to be connected to Cinergi, the studio doing our* Scud *movie, and the merchandise people there. Maybe once we get the movie up on the silver screen, we'll see what we can do with it."*

**Dear Wizard,**
Hey! I always thought that in the DC Universe, Metropolis was based on New York City. But my friend tells me Gotham City is based on New York. Can DC base two fake cities on the same real city?

**John Haten**
**Deer Park, TX**

*Well, it's the comics, so they can do whatever they want. But the fact of the matter is that your friend is right. Gotham is loosely based on New York, while Metropolis is based on Toronto.*

**Dear Wizard,**
Is Pamela Anderson ever going to star in another "Barb Wire" movie?

**Josh Bierman**
**Estacada, OR**

*If she has half a brain in her head, she'll never touch that property again. So you gotta figure there's a 50/50 chance.*

**Wizard,**
Who do you think would come out on top if the Punisher were to battle Mack Bolan: The Executioner?

**Chris Beckham**
**Nashville, TN**

*Well, seeing as how the Punisher is a rather obvious knock-off of paperback novel adventure hero Mack Bolan (Boy, is that comment going to cause me trouble. But it's true. The premise for each character is incredibly similar and Bolan predates Punny by many years.), the answer is obvious: Bolan offs Frank Castle, no contest.*

**Dear Guys,**
Why is Lady Death's hair so damn big?

**Hardrick M. Gulley**
**Rockford, IL**

*Her hair is the first thing he notices?*

**Dear Wizard People,**
Who is the artist on the comic *Big Guy and*

## PENPALS

**Bryan Lowry**
Age: 13 Sex: Male
880 Wallan Rd.
Garberville, CA 95542
Likes: All Spider-titles, *Gambit*, *Marvel vs. DC*

**Fred Herrera**
Age: 19 Sex: Male
234 Woodside Avenue
Newark, NJ 07104
Likes: *Gen*[13], *DefCon 4*, *Spawn*

**Jon Hoffman**
Age: 17 Sex: Male
137 W. Academy St.
Clayton, NJ 08312
Likes: *The Books of Magic*, *Madman*, *Atomic City Tales*

**Timothy Hooks**
Age: 11 Sex: Male
256 17th Ave. SE
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Likes: *X-Man*, *Spider-Man*, *Fantastic Four*

**Dennis Haloulos**
Age: 13 Sex: Male
DennisHal@aol.com
Likes: X-titles, *Death*, Spider-titles

**Evan Rosenberg**
Age: 11 Sex: Male
Skin17@aol.com
Likes: *Generation X*, *X-Men*, *Uncanny X-Men*

**Matt Ferguson**
Age: 16 Sex: Male
Grifter638@aol.com
Likes: Jim Lee titles, *Gen*[13], *Ash*

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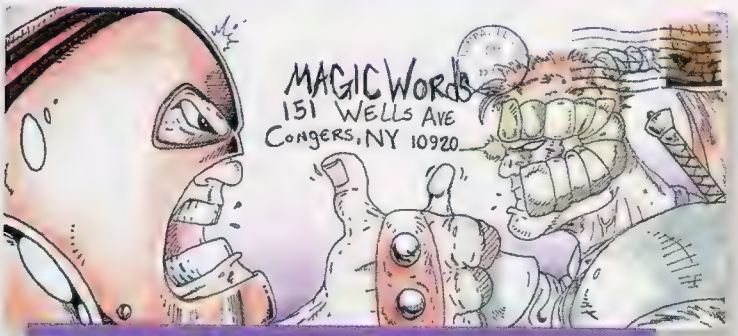
# LETTER ART

Fans who got their letter art printed this month will each receive a Bronze *X-Men* #1 Mint-Card, a copy of this issue of *Wizard* signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff, and a funky *Wizard* cap! The creator of the best envelope wins the issue and cap, plus a Silver *X-Men* #1 Mint-Card! (Thanks for the loot, Highland Mint!) Artists: Please include a clearly printed return address on the *back* of your envelope.

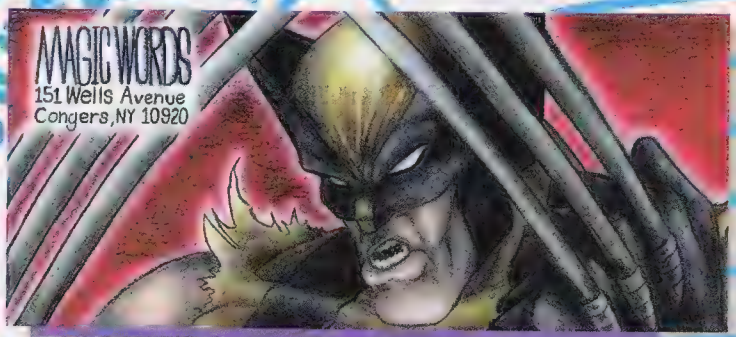
**envelope of the month**

**SUPERMAN** John Occhiuto Middle Village, NY




**JUGGY VS. SHATTY** Anthony Palamaro Stone Hill, PA

**IRON MAN** Rellim Kiro Bradenton, FL




**WOLVERINE** Joshua Meraz Sandy, UT

more letters from beyond the grave

**THE PRIZE**

*Rusty the Boy Robot?*

**Niki Dojcinovic**
**Calgary, Alberta, Canada**

*That would be Geof Darrow. Unfortunately, due to the heavily detailed quality of his work, Mr. Darrow works at a very slow pace and does very few comics. If you dug* Big Guy, *try* Hard Boiled, *another Dark Horse title that combines that talents of Darrow and Frank Miller.*

**Dear Wizard People,**

Who's the guy in the bunny suit?

**Brian Skiff**
**Los Angeles, CA**

*This is a surprisingly common question. But it's not a guy in a suit. It's an actual bunny that we found romping on the lawn outside our building. He's actually very friendly and we've been able to teach him some rudimentary typing skills, although the lack of an opposable thumb makes reaching the space bar a bit of a problem for him. Still, that's nothing compared to the problem we have with him leaving pellets all over the place.*

*Sometimes I think we're too close to those toxic waste dumps in Jersey.*

**Yo, Wizardites:**

I found out Wolverine's first name! It's "Cosmo"! Cosmo Logan!

**Alejandro Arbona**
**San Juan, PR**

*Now here's someone who obviously watches way too much TV. Start reading more comics, Smedley.*

*Geez, two "overrated" comments, a trading card question and a "first name" letter. Wolverine pretty much owned this column. Maybe I should show the guy some respect. Nah.*

*Until next month, I remain...*

*—Jim McLauchlin*

*Jim McLauchlin provides you with this completely unnecessary San Diego Con update: He spent 50¢ while there (two back issues of* Animal Man*), met something named "Kamala Petty" and got a piece of free gum from Michael O'Harer.*

**Send letters to:**
**Magic Words**
**151 Wells Ave.**
**Congers, NY 10920**
**or e-mail us at WizardTGTC@AOL.Com**

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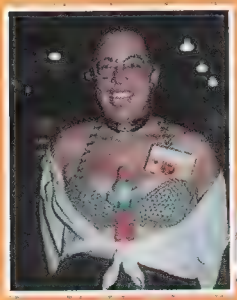
# GEN[13] KIDS SET To Crash Gotham

*Giant disco muppet punches monkey in the nuggets. "Watch yourself, fanboy, no crotch is safe!" cackled polyester-suited Horseman of the Apocalypse.*

*Jim Shooter goes pantsless in an effort to promote Broadway Comics. "Dat's terrable. Dat man shoud put some pants on," commented Unholy Lord of Darkness.*



*Got Milk?*

Gotham City will be getting some unexpected visitors when the kids of **Gen[13]** come into town, crashing head-first into **Batman**'s world this December. Talk about a mismatch made in comic fan heaven.

The story, which is still being finalized, will involve dealings between Gen[13]'s nemesis, **Ivana Baiul** and the ever-grinning **Joker**. "The Gen[13] kids come to Gotham City on the trail of Ivana, who is somehow working with the Joker," Batman group liaison Scott Peterson said. "All this action naturally attracts Batman's attention, and the story unfolds from there."

"It's kind of a 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' type of story," series writer **Brandon Choi** offered. "An action/adventure that will cater to the more serious overtones of the Batman books, while still allowing the Gen[13] kids to be themselves."

Choi said that while plans for DC/WildStorm crossovers have been in the works for a couple of years, Gen[13] artist **Jeff Campbell**'s love of Batman really got this project moving. "Jeff expressed a strong interest in drawing Batman, who has always been one of his favorite characters. We tossed the idea to DC, and Denny [O'Neil, Batman group editor] must have been intrigued by the idea. So over dinner at WonderCon, we hashed out plot ideas and reached a common ground where we could go ahead with the project."

Peterson admitted that while Batman won't spend the entire crossover with his hand on his forehead muttering, "Why me?" the feeling will be present. "There are a multitude of reasons why Batman wouldn't work well with a bunch of teenagers," he explained. "The fun comes when you play off of that. If you put the two together and try to be serious, it comes off as ridiculous, but for example, when you mix Batman with an alien hunter as in *Batman vs. Predator*—where we played off their differences—it worked out very well."

Choi agreed that, as far as the characters go, the free-spirited kids of Gen[13] and the moody Batman couldn't be more different. "My favorite analogy is that Batman is 'NYPD Blue,' while Gen[13] is the 'Friends' of comics," he said. "When you mix the two together, you have to be very careful. It's going to be a very tricky mix to pull off, but after our discussions with Denny, I think there is a common ground that we can reach."

*Batman/Gen[13]* will be a two-issue mini-series, written by Choi, and penciled by Campbell, with inks by **Alex Garner**. Issue #1 ships in December. ■ *Matthew Brady*

**ahead**

GEN[13] SPINOFF BOOK!

FAN AWARD WINNERS!

HOBGOBLIN IDENTITY TO BE REVEALED!

AND COMPANY UPDATES!

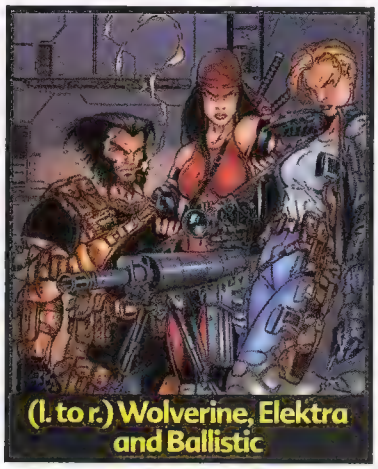
# Marvel, Top Cow Prepare for December Crossover

Hellfire and slugfests accompany the Yuletide spirit into December this year, as **Marvel Comics** and the newly independent **Top Cow Productions** launch an as-yet-unnamed eight-part crossover series.

In the first of the books, **Weapon Zero/Silver Surfer**, Marvel's chief devil incarnate, **Mephisto**, spies another dimension seemingly ripe for conquest: the Top Cow Universe. Mephisto tricks the Surfer into inadvertently opening up a portal between the two worlds and slips through. Once there, Mephisto creates an army of Top Cow characters—some villains, some heroes—and turns them into his infernal lieutenants.

"The head one is going to be a really big character in Top Cow," teased **David Wohl**, editor-in-chief of Top Cow. "It's a hero right now, and it's going to become a villain permanently."

In subsequent issues, Marvel and Top Cow characters will "run" from issue to issue, with one encounter leading to another. Events play out in the second book, **Witchblade/Ghost Rider**, that next lead Ghost Rider into a meeting with Ballistic in **Ghost Rider/Ballistic**, and so forth. Subsequent issues will be **Ballistic/Elektra**, **Elektra/Cyblade**, **Cyblade/Wolverine**, **Wolverine/Witchblade**, and another bookend **Silver Surfer/Weapon Zero** issue.



(l. to r.) Wolverine, Elektra and Ballistic

But Wohl stressed that other Marvel and Top Cow players are involved in the series. "**Cyberforce** as a whole plays a major part, as do a whole bunch of other characters."

Although a product of both companies, the eight issues will be drawn by Top Cow artists including Marc Silvestri and Joe Benitez. Marvel's presence will be bolstered by writers such as Howard Mackie and editorial duties by Bob Harras.

Unlike many inter-company projects, the crossover is expected to have major ramifications on both Marvel and Top Cow, creating more permanent company ties than was accomplished by the recent *Marvel versus DC* crossover. To that end, there may be an exchange of Marvel and Top Cow characters. "The portal isn't going to be permanently closed at the end of the eight issues," Wohl said. "Some of our characters may end up in Marvel's Universe and vice versa."

The eight issues will be released weekly through December and January, at $2.95 per issue. The series will be commemorated by Top Cow's production of a trading card set, currently under negotiation with Fleer. ■ *Lars Pearson*

# Gen$^{13}$ Spinoff Title to Debut in November

Get ready for a new ***Gen$^{13}$*** spinoff title.

**WildStorm Productions** plans to release a second ongoing monthly *Gen$^{13}$* title this November entitled ***Gen$^{13}$ Bootleg***.

The new series will feature a rotating creative team on each story arc with **Alan Davis** and **Mark Farmer** slated to do the first two issues. **Terry Moore** and **Tom Koker** will then take the creative reigns from issues #3-#5.

"There have been a whole lot of people wanting to do *Gen$^{13}$* stories, but at the same time, Brandon Choi and J. Scott Campbell have an extended tale they want to tell, and we don't necessarily want people getting in the middle of it," said Jeff Mariotte, marketing director at WildStorm. "Now, lots of top talent that wanted to get their hands on *Gen$^{13}$* can."

*Gen$^{13}$ Bootleg* will contain miscellaneous collections of Gen$^{13}$ stories that have theoretically taken place within the last year. WildStorm states that the stories in *Gen$^{13}$ Bootleg* will not conflict with continuity, as they'll fit between the adventures told in the regular *Gen$^{13}$* series.

Moore, a self-avowed *Gen$^{13}$* fan, jumped at the opportunity to write the book. "I've been reading *Gen$^{13}$* all along, so I love the characters and feel like I know them pretty well. I had this notion that it'd be cool if Fairchild fell in love," he said. "She meets a guy on an elevator in the library, rides up three floors and when she gets off, the guy disappears" and Fairchild has mysteriously lost 30 minutes of her life. "The story starts from there."

The first story arc by Alan Davis, called "The Lindquist Fault," has the team separated and lost in different realities. Mariotte said, "They think they're achieving their hearts desire, but there's a darker purpose hanging over it all." Davis was unavailable for comment.

According to Mariotte, *Gen$^{13}$ Bootleg* is adopting "the Sandman approach—different people will have a shot at doing stories."

"If that doesn't pique your interest," said Moore, "I don't know what will." ■ *Matthew Senreich*

## BUZZ BOX

### The inside scoop on the comic industry

• Word has it that **Alex Ross** is painting additional pages for an upcoming ***Kingdom Come*** hardcover collection. The additions are said to expand parts of the story. It is unknown what scenes are rumored to be added.

• It's official! Marvel has said that when **Peter Parker** returns as **Spider-Man** in the fall, so too will the classic Spidey costume. Still no word on the fate of **Ben Reilly**.

• With **Shaquille O'Neal** signed on for the "**Steel**" flick, DC has put a new team on the *Steel* comic with issue #34 in November: writer **Christopher Priest**, penciler **Denys Cowan** and inker **Tom Palmer**.

• Rumor has it that **WildStorm**, **Top Cow** and **Crusade** are collaborating on a top secret project which combines comic books and games. More news as it comes in.

• Early '97 sees a new two-issue **Shi** mini-series set in 1941 Hawaii, right before the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

• **Neil Gaiman** back on ***Miracleman***? Maybe, as insiders say that **Todd McFarlane** will resurrect the former Eclipse title in 1997 with hopes of having it written by Gaiman or Alan Moore. Also rumored are talks of a possible TV or movie deal.

# Chaos! Gears Up For 1997 Expansion

As far as **Chaos! Comics** Publisher **Brian Pulido** is concerned, you ain't seen nothing yet. "While we're still expanding very slowly and carefully, next year will see the world of Chaos! grow like never before," he said.

The expansion begins in January, 1997 when **Chastity**, who debuted in this year's ***Evil Ernie: Straight to Hell*** mini-series, gets her own four- or five-issue mini-series, telling the story of how she became a vampire, and why she's now a hitman for vampires. Set in the 1977 London punk rock scene, Pulido promised that he'll draw on his own history as a punker to tell her story.

Evil Ernie will see more action in 1997 as well, starting with January's ***Evil Ernie Versus the Movie Monsters***, a parody/tribute to Hollywood's biggest bad guys. Ernie will kick off his boldest mini-series ever in February with ***Evil Ernie: Quest for Nukes***. The nine-issue mini-series will guest star Chastity, and finally reveal the whereabouts of Judy Young, Dr. Price, Mary and Billy.

Spring will see the release of a four-issue mini-series painted by Mike Okamoto, tentatively titled *Witch*. It will focus on the battle between a white witch and her nemesis, Epitaph, and co-star **Lady Death**.

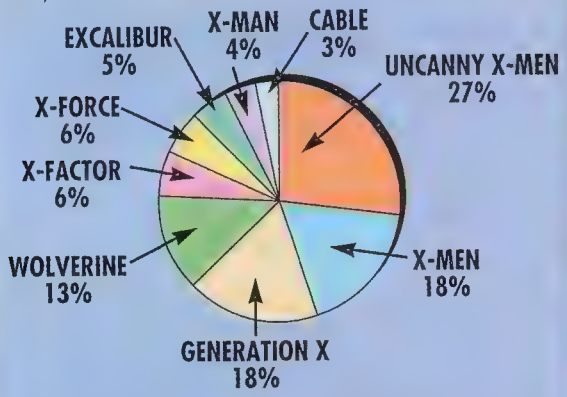
Chaos' as-yet-unnamed summer project will unify the divergent themes and stories that have come up in the past two years' worth of books, while setting the stage for two mini-series featuring **Cremator** and **Bedlam** later in the year. Beyond that point, Pulido guaranteed that he has the entire Chaos epic planned out, up to and including the 12-issue series that begins in January of 1999, and wraps up at the end of the century.

Pulido also admitted that he won't be doing all the writing by himself anymore. "We'll be getting some new writers...slowly. This will add a fresh perspective on the whole tapestry that we're building and slowly linking together. It's going to be great." ■ *Matthew Brady*

## Question of the Month

X-Men! X-Men! X-Men! All we keep hearing lately is X-Men. But what with Onslaught going berserk lately and the Legacy virus knockin' off muties left and right, we thought we'd base this month's AOL question on the exorbitant amount of mutants in the Marvel Universe. So we used our "Wizard World" forum on America Online to ask the following:

If you were put in charge of Marvel right now and had to cut all of the X-books down to just three titles, which three of the following would you keep: ***X-Men***, ***Uncanny X-Men***, ***Generation X***, ***Excalibur***, ***X-Man***, ***Cable***, ***X-Factor***, ***X-Force*** or ***Wolverine***?




We also asked fans their opinions on the following mutated questions:

• Who is your favorite X-Men writer: Scott Lobdell (**58%**), Mark Waid (**24%**), Warren Ellis (**6%**), Larry Hama (**6%**), Jeph Loeb (**6%**) or Howard Mackie (**0%**)? While Waid only wrote a handful of X-Men issues, he apparently made an impression on his readers. Lobdell, however, is clearly a fan-favorite, mainly because, as one fan posted, "Scott Lobdell seems to be able to meld with a group title more easily."

• Who is your favorite X-Men artist: Andy Kubert (**31%**), Joe Madureira (**31%**), Chris Bachalo (**22%**), Ian Churchill (**9%**), Jeff Matsuda (**4%**) or Roger Cruz (**3%**)? Kubert's fans were quite passionate about his work, while Madureira's fans loved his style. "Artistically, Joe Madureira is such a breath of fresh air after all the Lee/Liefeld clones that pervaded the books," posted one fan.

• Which mutant would you like to see get his or her own mini-series? Without a doubt, fans are dying for another Gambit mini-series and an Archangel/Psylocke one. Besides those, the next most requested mutants were Nightcrawler, Iceman, Jubilee, Deadpool and the whole Generation X gang. Other mutants who got a slight mention were Namor (the first mutant, after all), Magneto, Mimic, Omega Red, Beast, Banshee, Xavier, Mr. Sinister, X-Treme and Forge. ■ *Sorrell Booke*

## SPOTLIGHT ON:

**TITLE:** Cavewoman
**CREATOR:** Budd Root
**PUBLISHER:** Caliber Comics
**CURRENT ISSUE:** *Cavewoman: Rain #4* (at bit bits stands in September. (*Cavewoman: Rain* is the second *Cavewoman* series in the trilogy.)
**BACK ISSUES:** Published by Basement Comics, which is planning on putting out a trade paperback reprinting *Cavewoman #1-16* in November

(Cavewoman begins on a little island. Meanwhile, that Gods had transported 75 million years into the past, surrounded by walking lost dinosaurs. The heroine, a young woman (Rain), for (Cavewoman) who has actually been living there for 13 years before the team were stranded. The lost also been transported from Manhattan one time past. The story deals with Rain's attempts to be reunited with the team she once lived in, and the lost lost allies she meets concerning the development in time. All the while, the reader must wonder how (if) the team will ever make it back to the future.

Now, the 37 year old creator of Cavewoman has managed to blend her fascination with the better years with that of the "Little Annie Fanny" comic strip, found in the back of *Playboy*. The result is scary fun, much like some stories of the 1930s and '40s. ■ *Matthew Sumeet*

# *Wizard* Fan Awards Announced

Many of today's best creators and companies got just what they deserved as they grabbed some gold at the 1996 *Wizard* Fan Awards, held at Dragon*Con in Atlanta recently.

In front of 500 attendees, *Wizard* Publisher Gareb Shamus and Direct Sales Manager Marty Stever announced the 31 award winners, selected by *Wizard* readers through a mail-in ballot.

**Scott Lobdell** (*Uncanny X-Men*) captured Favorite Writer, beating out a tough field which included **Peter David**, **Neil Gaiman** and **Mark Waid**. "If you knew Scott, you'd know he'd *really, really, really* think he deserved this," said Marvel Editor-in-Chief **Bob Harras**, accepting the award for Lobdell. "He'll be tickled pink when I call him tonight."

After the event, the trophy-laden Harras noted that he was very surprised at the number of awards Marvel amassed (22), that he was very happy about **Captain America**'s two impressive wins ("Mark Waid and **Ron Garney** did a phenomenal job"), and that Lobdell actually uses the word "really" a lot.

With four nods each, Image and DC Comics tied for second place in the company contest. Image's Spawn and Gen[13] were responsible for its awards, while individual heroes like Robin and Wonder Woman brought laurels to DC.

Bob Harras

Photo by Capo

## The Winners

Favorite Writer: **Scott Lobdell**
Favorite Penciler: **Joe Madureira**
Favorite Inker: **Todd McFarlane**
Favorite Colorist: **Steve Buccellato/ Electric Crayon**
Favorite Letterer: **Richard Starkings**
Favorite Cover Artist: **Adam Kubert**
Favorite Editor: **Bob Harras**
Favorite Painter: **Alex Ross**
Favorite Hero: **Wolverine**
Favorite Heroine: **Rogue**
Favorite Villain: **Magneto**
Favorite Villainess: **Catwoman**
Favorite Supporting Male Character: **Robin**
Favorite Supporting Female Character: **Mary Jane Parker**
Most Improved Male Character: **Captain America**
Most Improved Female Character: **Wonder Woman**
Character Most Deserving of Own Ongoing Title: **Gambit**
Favorite Publisher: **Marvel Comics**
Favorite Single Issue: ***X-Men Alpha***
Favorite Story Arc: **"Age of Apocalypse" (X-Men titles)**
Favorite Ongoing Title: ***Uncanny X-Men***
Most Improved Ongoing Title: ***Captain America***
Favorite Cover: ***Gen[13]* #1**
Favorite One-Shot or Mini-Series: ***Rogue***
Favorite Graphic Novel, TPB or Hardcover: ***Gen[13]* TPB**
Favorite Trading Card Series or Set (tie): ***Marvel Metal, Ultra X-Men II***
Favorite Toy Line: **Spawn**
Favorite TV Series: **"The X-Files"**
Favorite Animated TV Series: **"X-Men"**
Favorite Feature Film: **"Batman Forever"**

■ *Marc Wilkofsky*

## We Looked It Up

Photo by Al Ortega

**Tu•cci** (Too Chee), William, Elliott (Billy) n.1966-present; 1 creator, writer and artist of *Shi* from Crusade Comics 2 known as "The Tooch" around the *Wizard* offices 3 name most commonly confused with what little old ladies say when they tickle babies under their chins

# Robinson Preps for the Silver Age

Ever since the tantalizing shot of DC's classic Silver Age heroes on the last page of the critically acclaimed ***Golden Age*** by **James Robinson** and **Paul Smith**, fans have been clamoring for the next installment of Robinson's unique view of the age of heroes. The wait just got shorter.

James Robinson has been creating quite a stir at this summer's conventions by talking up ***The Silver Age***, the four-issue mini-series follow-up to *The Golden Age*. Tentatively scheduled for next summer, **Howard Chaykin** is slated to supply the art.

"The story starts with police officer Jim Harper, who was the Golden Age hero, Guardian, investigating a series of apparently unconnected murders," Robinson said. "He'll confer with King Faraday and begin to realize that there is more to the murders than he originally thought. The ramifications go right through the American Cold War government, right through to the top."

Harper gets taken off the case, and the new detective who picks up Harper's workload is John Jones, a.k.a. J'onn J'onzz, a.k.a. **The Martian Manhunter**. From there on out, the story will involve the **Barry Allen Flash**, the **Hal Jordan Green Lantern**, **Green Arrow** in his original green costume, **Captain Comet**, the **Doom Patrol**, the **Challengers of the Unknown** and plenty of cameos and guest appearances.

"There will also be a few Golden Age characters making appearances as well, including the Golden Age **Hawkman**, **Hourman** and the Ted Knight **Starman**, of course," Robinson said.

As with *The Golden Age*, *The Silver Age* will be told from a variety of viewpoints. "The actual 'people' who narrate the story will be the casebooks of Jim Harper, King Faraday and John Jones," Robinson revealed. "However, the narration about the new age of heroes will be the reporter's journals of **Iris West**, back when she was just Barry Allen's girlfriend.

"It should be a nice complex story, similar to *The Golden Age*, but its not a direct sequel; its the next installment of the same universe. If readers enjoyed *Kingdom Come* this summer, they should enjoy *The Silver Age* next summer." ■ *Matthew Brady*

ALL BLEED ART MUST EXTEND TO SOLID LINE

heroes reborn

# Fantastic Four

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brandon choi
scott williams

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MARVEL COMICS

putting the character back in comics

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# Stern Returns to Reveal Hobgoblin's Identity

**Roger Stern** has been lured back to Spidey's web.

**Marvel** has confirmed that Stern—whose run on **Spider-Man** 12 years ago has been compared to Stan Lee's—will return to write a new three-issue Spider-Man mini-series this fall tentatively titled ***Spider-Man: Hobgoblin Lives***. Stern, currently working on Superman, promises to reveal the true identity of the original Hobgoblin.

"It's a story that has taken me 12 years to do," Stern admitted. He created and built up the Hobgoblin into a popular mystery Spidey-villain and, as he did, secretly added his true identity into Spider-Man's supporting cast. However, Stern departed *Amazing Spider-Man* before having the opportunity to actually write in the Hobgoblin's true secret identity and passed the writing mantle on to **Tom DeFalco**. So, the mystery remained. Later, DeFalco and **Peter David** revealed that the Hobgoblin was *Daily Bugle* reporter **Ned Leeds**. Stern never intended Leeds to be the original Hobgoblin and was "astounded that they were able to put together what they did."

Stern fondly remembers reading DeFalco and David's story at the time and wondering about a loophole that proved Ned wasn't the Hobgoblin. "Hobgoblin was as strong as Spider-Man, so if four of the Foreigner's assassins jumped him, they probably would've turned into red paste on the walls. This didn't happen. In fact, they killed Ned. One of the assassins broke Ned's arm...so what does this tell us? Ned *couldn't* have been the Hobgoblin because he wasn't super strong."

So who was/is the real Hobgoblin and where's he been? "By the end of the story, *all* will be revealed. The nice thing is that everything I intended is still intact." Both the new and old supporting cast of Spider-Man will be prominent including **Betty Brant**, **Flash Thompson**, **J. Jonah Jameson** and **Mary Jane**.

Will Stern ever return full-time to Spider-Man? "That depends on if they want me and if the schedules work out. I'm just glad we were able to work this one out. Spider-Man's been around 35 years now, and by God, he's still a lot of fun!" ■ *Matthew Senreich*

## Artist Mike Parobeck Dies of Diabetes Complications

The artist who personified the animated style of superheroics in comic books for the 1990s, **Mike Parobeck**, died July 2, less than a week before his 31st birthday. The cause was complications resulting from a long-standing battle with diabetes, including anorexia nervosa.

Parobeck's work, mostly for **DC Comics**, included *El Diablo*, ***The Justice Society of America***, *The Fly* and ***Batman Adventures***, the latter based on the popular Fox Network animated series. In addition, he did stories for Welsh's ***Superman & Batman Magazine***, featuring not only the title characters but most of DC's superhero stars, and had also contributed to a line of Golden Books based on DC characters. DC's Licensed Publishing Editor Charles Kochman said, "Mike gave our characters new life, enabling these animated versions to co-exist along with their mainstream superhero counterparts."

Parobeck's style was often said to be out of fashion, but his long-time friend and frequent collaborator **Len Strazewski** disagreed. Strazewski, who worked with Parobeck on *JSA* and *The Fly*, said, "In some ways, Mike's style was actually *ahead* of the industry. If you look at his work on *The Fly* and compare it to the stuff **Humberto Ramos** is doing on *Impulse* or the manga-like style that's being adapted on ***X-Men***, you see that Mike was ahead of the curve in doing a lighter and more expressive style. His style was full of motion and character, and you're starting to see that in the hot comics of today." ■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

## LONG JOHNS

by Adam Stoller

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# company updates

## AARDWOLF PUBLISHING

To raise money to benefit child abuse victims, Joe Kubert, Gene Colan, George Pérez and others collaborate on *Crawling from the Wreckage*, a 100-page trade paperback containing 10 original stories from different creative teams. All profits from the October book will go to the New Jersey's Family Intervention Services, a non-profit organization.

## ARCHIE COMICS

October's *Sabrina #1*, a one-shot heralding ABC's new "Sabrina" sitcom, will have a photo cover featuring Melissa Joan Hart, the show's star. Look for more new Sabrina books in early 1997.

## BASEMENT COMICS

A graphic novel reprinting the hard-to-find original *Cavewoman* series (#1-#5) will be released in November.

## BONGO COMICS

*Roswell: Little Green Man!* #1, Bongo's first non-Simpsons property, hits shelves in September.... October sees another *Bart Simpson's Treehouse of Horror*—this time featuring the monstrosity, Sideshow Blob! And check out Lisa Simpson as the Exorsister! Peter Bagge (*Hate*) and Paul Dini (*Batman and Robin Adventures, Superman Adventures*) are among the contributors.

## BROADWAY COMICS

With *Knights on Broadway* #1, Broadway Comics unveils new cover designs for all of its titles, going to a more "classic" comic book style logo for each book in its stable—*Fatale, Star Seed* and *Knights*. Each cover will have larger logos and more visible issue numbers.... *Till Death Do Us Part* (formerly *Shadow State*) goes on hiatus following issue #5.

## CALIBER PRESS

Caliber launches its new Tapestry line of creator-owned comics in October, featuring titles that've been published by other small press independent companies. They include *Boondoggle, Explorers, The Hoon, Pakkin's Land, Patty Cake, Shades of Gray, Terror Tots* and *Trollords*.

## CHAOS! COMICS

In October, Chaos! releases a new mini-series: *Lady Death: The Crucible* #1 (of 6).... *Lady Death and the Women of Chaos! Gallery* #1 features pin-up art by Steven Hughes, Jim Balent, Joe Linsner and others.... Check out the *Cast of Chaos!* poster and the heavy metal CD debut of the Chaos!-produced band Doomsday this October. (Look for the Evil Ernie album cover!)

## COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

At the San Diego Comic Book Expo in July, the CBLDF presented its first "Defender of Liberty Awards" to two creators who have supported the Fund and its goals: *Cerebus* creator Dave Sim, who has often defended free speech and has donated over $122,000 to the organization, and *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* artist Paul Mavrides, who was recognized for his support of creators' rights. The award statues were sculpted by Randy Bowen.

## CRUSADE

The *Shi: The Way of the Warrior* Trade Paperback Vol. II is available in September, collecting issues #5 to #8 of the regular series, including the hard-to-find *Shi #6/Tomoe #1*.... October's *Shi: Kaidan* celebrates Halloween with timeless tales of terror. *Kaidan* means "ghost stories" in Japanese.... The adventures of Shi's deadly friend Tomoe are gathered in one volume in October's *Tomoe* Trade Paperback #1, featuring the talents of Billy Tucci, Dan Mishkin, Jimmy Palmiotti and Amanda Conner.

## DARK HORSE COMICS

Starting this November you can pick up John Kricfalusi's (creator of "Ren and Stimpy") hilarious six-issue mini-series *Comic Book*, starring George Liquor and

continued on page 24

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FOR DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD

 (continued from page 22)

Jimmy the Idiot Boy....The final issue of *Sin City: That Yellow Bastard* had some printing problems, resulting in much of the yellow color looking quite greenish. Dark Horse has fixed the problem in a second print and will gladly give retailers the corrected version in exchange for the first prints. Retailers should contact Dark Horse for more info....November's *Mudman Comics: Yearbook '96* ($17.95) reprints issues #6-#10 of Mike Allred's popular comic....Kevin J. Anderson will be penning *Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi—The Golden Age of the Sith*, which takes place 1,000 years prior to the last *Tales of the Jedi* series. This five-issue series begins in October....December sees Frank Miller's *Sin City: Lost, Lonely and Lethal*. This 32-page one-shot features three short stories, one reprinting the "Fat Man and Little Boy" story from a 1995 San Diego Comic Con book.

## DC COMICS

In October is *Green Lantern Plus*, teaming GL and The Ray against Dr. Polaris. The story's by Ron Marz....Also that month is the *Green Lantern Gallery* featuring art by Bart Sears, George Pérez, Bernie Wrightson and others.

## EVENT COMICS

Writer James Robinson (*Starman*) will take over *Ash* beginning with the new mini-series in early 1997....Event will be publishing George Pérez's creator-owned mini-series *Crimson Plague*, which is set to debut at the 1997 Heroes Con in Charlotte, N.C....The November *Ash/22 Brides* crossover leads into December's *Ash/Azrael* graphic novel....Several major Event projects are in the works for 1997, including a 48-page *Ash Special* by Mark Waid, Mike Wieringo and Jimmy Palmiotti, and a crossover between the 22 Brides and Gen[13] by Waid, Humberto Ramos and Palmiotti.

## FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

Peter Bagge's *Hate* #25 features the climactic story "It Had to Happen." Buddy and Lisa finally break up, but Buddy just can't seem to let go.

## FIREMAN PRESS

Look for a *Scud* video game to hit Sega Saturn this Christmas!

## HARRIS COMICS

Vampirella returns in November's *Vampirella Lives*. This three-issue mini-series, by Warren Ellis, Amanda Conner and Jimmy Palmiotti, leads right into February's two-issue James Robinson-written/Joe Jusko-painted Vampi book....Keep track of things with the Vampirella 1997 deluxe calendar, featuring art by Frank Frazetta, Adam Hughes, Jusko and more! It retails for $14.95.

## IMAGE COMICS

### • EXTREME STUDIOS

Badrock goes back to school and meets Pink Ranger Kat in October's *Power Rangers Zeo/Youngblood* #1 (of 2), featuring the writing of Rob Liefeld and Mary Bierbaum, and art by Todd Nauck and Norm Rapmund.

### • TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS

October's *Spawn the Impaler* takes a cold, hard look at the comparisons between a vampire and a Hellspawn. Written by Mike Grell and painted by Rob Prior, this three-issue mini-series retails for $2.95.

### • WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS

December's *WildC.A.T.s* #34 will be Alan Moore's last issue as scripter. Garth Ennis will then be taking over the writing chores with the following issue, scheduled for January....Due to an error, a number of the pages in *Hazard* #3 were printed out of order. Retailers will be able to send back the misprinted copies for a corrected version....The five-issue *Black Ops* mini-series will be collected into a trade paperback this October for $14.95.

## KEVLAR STUDIOS

*Horseman* #2 adds Buzz (*Vengeance of Vampirella*) and Michael Bair (*Hellstorm*) to the roster of regular artists on the book, which is scheduled for October.

## KITCHEN SINK PRESS

October's *The Crow: Wild Justice* is a three-issue mini-series by Jerry Prosser and Charles Adlard which sees the victim of a fatal carjacking return 15 years later to enact revenge on his and his wife's killers....The newly revised edition of *Heavy Metal: The Movie* features an inside look behind the creative process of the popular animated cult classic. This 144-page softcover, shipping in October, retails for $24.95.

## LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS

*Razor* #1, an all-ages Razor series which intros the antiheroine's new costume, is due out in September....David Quinn's horror title *Nightvision*, launching in October, brings artist Kyle Hotz (*Carnage*) to the company.

## MALIBU COMICS

In October comes *Angels of Destruction*, a one-shot written by Brian Michael Bendis (*a.k.a. Goldfish*), with art by a variety of newcomers. The cover is by Hajime Sorayama, known internationally for painting cool chrome robot babes.

## MARVEL

Steve Skroce (*X Men*) joins the Spider-team, helping to reveal the mastermind behind the Clone saga, in *Amazing Spider-Man* #418 in October. Also, Mary Jane's pregnancy reaches its shocking conclusion in that issue....*Daily Bugle*, a black-and-white series featuring the talents of Paul Grist (*Kane*) and Karl Kerschl, debuts in October with #1 (of 3)....Also getting their own four-part mini-series in October are Mystique and Sabretooth, in issue, as the mutant assassins from X-Factor reunite....Make sure to get hold of *The Essential X-Men Collection* ($12.95) Oct. 9, featuring 528 pages of the classic X-Men in manga "phone book"-style volumes. Reprinted are *Giant-Size X-Men* #1 and *Uncanny X-Men* #94 #119 in black and white....If you thought the so-called "Days of Future Past" would never happen, think again. Check out *X-Men* #59 on Oct. 16 for the surprising answer....Marvel Comics has joined forces with Funstuff NY and Freeze to present a line of T-shirts and coordinating sets from the Spider-Man and Incredible Hulk animated TV series, available in boy's and men's sizes 4 to 20.

## MAXIMUM PRESS

Avengelyne's fall from grace is told in October's *Avengelyne* #0, from Rob Liefeld, Robert Napton, John Stinsman and Andy Park....The *Footsoldiers* series makes its Maximum Press debut in *Asylum* #8 in October....The Six Million Dollar Man and the Bionic Woman are back in *Bionix* #1 (of 3) in October. Also in October, *Cyberpunx* #1 debuts, focusing on a group of young "cyber"-teens trained by the government to battle Cyberlords.

## SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT

The quarterly anthology *Crypt of Dawn* debuts in October with a bunch of different creative types doing stories. Every issue will sport a Joe Linsner cover.

## SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS

*Hearts of Africa: Trials* will reprint issues #4-#7 of the acclaimed series *Tales from the Heart* in October, with an introduction by Neil Gaiman.

## SUMITEK

Sumitek, the publisher of *Taoland*, has changed its name to Severe Reality Productions. *Taoland* #5 will be the first book printed with the new name in November.

## TOP COW PRODUCTIONS

Top Cow has announced that the release of issues #4, #5 and #6 of *21* have been delayed indefinitely. Solicitations for these issues are null and void and all inquiries should be forwarded to Top Cow.

## TOPPS COMICS

Lady Rawhide returns in October in her own monthly title. By Don McGregor and Esteban Maroto. Issue #1 sports a Julie Bell cover.

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# WIZARD SPECIAL REPORT

by Craig Shutt

# 'Watchmen,' 10 Years Later

"Who Watches the Watchmen?"

Millions of comic book fans, that's who. And though it was *Watchmen*'s tag line, it was never a matter of question.

A 12-issue maxi-series published by DC Comics, *Watchmen* took the comics industry by storm beginning in September 1986. Today, a decade later, it's still revered as a pinnacle in superhero storytelling and as a major influence on creators—both in good and bad ways. While it offered a unique perspective and an innovative structure to storytelling, it also put a grim, realistic spin on superheroes which started a dark new trend in comics that continues to this day. To Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, the series' creators, those supposed influences have little effect on their feelings of a job well done.

"It still holds up for me," says writer Alan Moore. "In terms of what I wanted to do with it, I think it exceeded my expectations."

Artist Dave Gibbons agrees. "I wouldn't change anything," he says. "There are a few places where I think I could have done better, but in some spots I'm still amazed at the complexity of what we were able to achieve."

Both agree that their plans for the book grew as they worked on it. "When we started, we wanted to do a good comic, but we let it grow," Moore says. "By issue #3, it was germinating into something more."

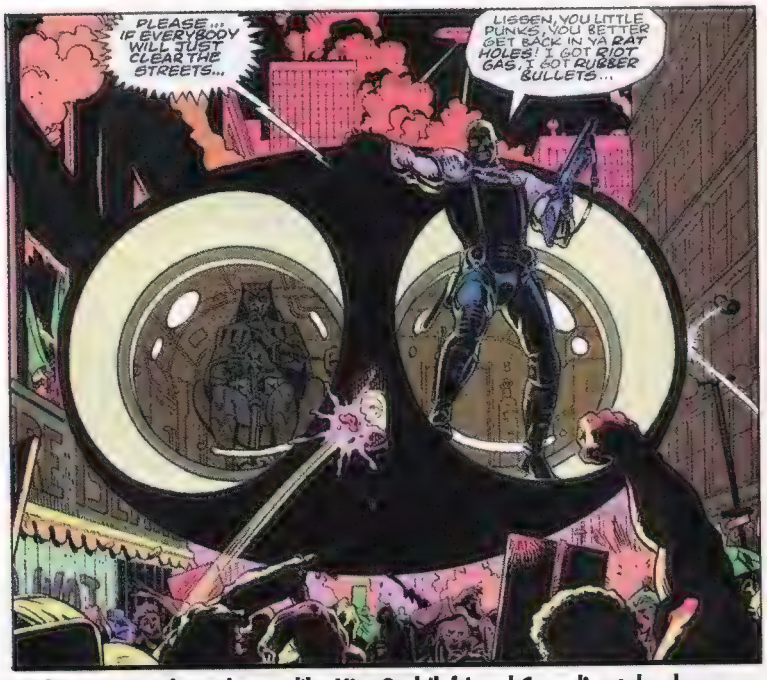
Adds Gibbons, "In issue #3, it was clear we were no longer doing a superhero story but a science-fiction story with some people who dressed up in costumes. That issue has symbolism and other things in it that were never in the original plot."

Sadly, Moore muses, *Watchmen*'s continuing impact, if any, is far from what it was predicted to be. "Everyone talked about a comics renaissance with *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, *Maus* and *Watchmen*," he says. "But there wasn't any renaissance. It was just three or four blokes doing good books. It was no bigger than that."

And Gibbons doesn't believe the *Watchmen* characters will ever return. "[Other creators] couldn't tell the story the way we did, and that's the enduring fascination." Add to that the fact that Moore won't work for DC, having split with the publisher over creator rights, and both creators agree that the time for prequels or sequels has past.

There are discussions underway about how to celebrate the 10th anniversary, Gibbons notes, including a possible new hardbound collection and other pieces. Both creators admit they are discussing another collaboration, though, which could be as innovative as *Watchmen* was in its day. The work would be presented in CD-ROM format, Gibbons says. "The more we talk, the more exciting it

**The Comedian (left), Rorschach makes new friends (above and below)**




**Police go on strike as heroes like Nite Owl (left) and Comedian take charge**

becomes. Alan and I had a great time working on *Watchmen*, and it would be a shame to let that atrophy and die. We're now having the same type of long, rambling discussions that we had then. It's really very exciting."

## Watching the Watchmen

Here's a sampling of what other creators say about *Watchmen* 10 years later:

**Neil Gaiman:** "I was astonished by its sheer technical bravura as well as Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' willingness not to make a big deal out of how impressive it was. If *Watchmen* has a problem, it's that they didn't realize how big it was going to be. Their rigid and brilliant structure didn't give them enough room to change, and the story outgrew its structure. They started off telling the ultimate superhero story, but it got bigger than that. As a result, it's ultimately less satisfying than it could have been."

**Alex Ross:** "It showed that something really epic and pure could be created in a multi-character, multi-part storyline. But its importance is not so much in its scale but in its execution and the intelligence with how it was created. It inspired a lot of my thinking today on superheroes. In fact, I went to some Halloween parties dressed as Rorschach."

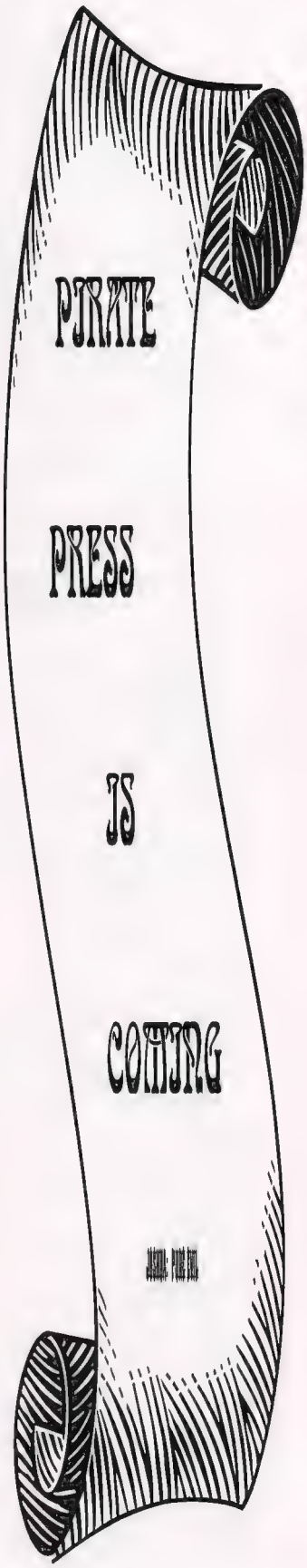
The god-like Dr. Manhattan

**Mark Waid:** "*Watchmen* was a masterpiece of plot structure. Everything meant something, and everything advanced the story. It's lean and cuts right to the bone, which should be the ultimate goal of any story."

**Kurt Busiek:** "It raised the level of discourse because it was so well-made. It was thought through on a level that comics hadn't reached before. And we can't hold Alan and Dave responsible for their cheesy imitators. They did something new, interesting and clever, and writers who were inspired by that should have done something else that was new, interesting and clever."

**Ron Marz:** "Combined with *Dark Knight*, it reignited my interest in comics, because it showed the possibilities inherent in the medium. There are a lot of children of *Watchmen* out there."

**Chuck Dixon:** "It was part of an era in which comics were raised to a new level of maturity, and I don't mean just nudity and graphic violence. There was a lot of subtext and deft characterization. We need another *Watchmen*, something to cut through the clutter." ■ *CS*



# BYTE THIS!

Legendary "Star Wars" actor **Mark Hamill** joins "Wizard World" for an all-out chat event on Sept. 18 @ 9 p.m. (EST). Fans can interview Hamill (a major comic collector) on his upcoming Dark Horse comic *The Black Pearl*, "Star Wars" or just about anything.

Summer is the time for download mania on "Wizard World." Leading the downloads are perennial fan favorites **Shi** and **Vampirella**. Images come directly from Crusade and Harris.

**Event Comics** promises to pump up its presence online with a massive comprehensive guide to **Ash** and the **22 Brides**.

A number of online regulars met with the *Wizard* online staff at the San Diego ComiCon. It was the first face-to-face meeting for most, but everyone felt just like family. Some of our favorite photos from the meeting are posted in the Picture Gallery in the "Wizard Photo Files." Download them and see what everyone looks like.

*Wizard* has dug deep into the archives to get the online area more than 100 logos from companies and comics. Fans have gotten into the act by uploading customized "Drawing Board" style logos. Some of the wildest ones are computer-generated 3-D interpretations.

*Wizard* encourages fans with their own pages to link to "Wizard World" at http://www.wizardpress.com.

To keep up with *Wizard* online happenings and late-breaking comic news, join our weekly e-mail list. To get on the list, send an e-mail called "Include Me!" to WizEmail@aol.com.

To hook up to "Wizard World" on America Online, call 800-754-4400. They'll send you free software and 10 hours free online. Keyword: Wizard.

### WIZARD WORLD'S REVISED CHAT SCHEDULES FOR THE SPECIAL EVENTS ROOM

**MONDAY**

- **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles**
  Time: 7-8 p.m. (EST) September 9, 16, 23, 30 & October 7, 14, 21, 28
- **Manga/Anime**
  Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST) September 9, 16, 23, 30 & October 7, 14, 21, 28
- **WildStorm**
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST) September 9, 23 & October 7, 21
- **Top Cow**
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST) September 16, 30 & October 14, 28

**TUESDAY**

- ***Wizard* Unplugged with *Wizard*'s Editors**
  Time: 6:30-7:30 p.m. (EST) September 3, 10, 17, 24 & October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
  Featuring: *Wizard* Editors Online
- **X-Men Trivia**
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST) September 3, 10, 17, 24 & October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
  Featuring: X-Pert Benny Powell

**WEDNESDAY**

- **Asteroid X Club (X-Men)**
  Time: 6-7 p.m. (EST) September 4, 11, 18, 25 & October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
- **Trivia Chat**
  Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST) September 4, 18 & October 2, 16, 30
  Featuring: *Wizard* Freelancer: Matt Brady
- **Avengers Assemble**
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST) September 4, 11, 18, 25 & October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

**THURSDAY**

- ***InQuest* Chat**
  Time: 7-8 p.m. (EST) September 5, 12
  Featuring: *InQuest* Freelancer: Rick Moscatello
- **Breaking In**
  Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST) September 12, 26 & October 10, 24
  Featuring: David Campiti
- **Mystery Guest**
  Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST) September 19 & October 17
  Featuring: Ruth Morrison & Mystery Guest
- **Manga/Anime**
  Time: 12-1 a.m. (EST) September 5, 12, 19, 26 & October 3, 10, 17, 24

**FRIDAY**

- **LOOP** (Legion of OverPower, Marvel CCG)
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST) September 6, 13, 20, 27 & October 4, 11, 18, 25

**SATURDAY**

- **Fantastic Four Club**
  Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST) September 7, 14, 21, 28 & October 5, 12, 19, 26

**SUNDAY**

- **Sandman100 Comic Book Chat**
  Time: 8-10 p.m. (EST) September 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 & October 6, 13, 20, 27
  Featuring: Don Lisk

■ *Buddy Scalera* (WizardTGTC@aol.com)

# NEWS BITES

## Batman & Robin Run for the Border

**Batman** & **Robin** will make a run for the border next summer. **Taco Bell** will team with **Warner Brothers** to promote the fourth Batman film, "Batman and Robin," in 7,000 Taco Bell restaurants across the U.S. ■ *Matthew Senreich*

## Marvel Studios Formed

**Marvel Entertainment Group** and **Toy Biz** have announced plans to form **Marvel Studios** in order to help the production and financing of live-action and animated feature films and television programming based on Marvel characters.

Although actual production is expected to continue to be done by other studios, producers and networks, Marvel Studios will provide greater control over the projects. Marvel and Toy Biz intend to fund Marvel Studios with $50 million each.

**Avi Arad** will be the creative head of Marvel Studios, whose projects will include a seven-year deal with the **Fox Children's Network** to provide at least four new animated series. ■ *Rob Allstetter*

## *Action Comics* #1 Sells For $61,900

**Steve Geppi**, owner of Diamond Comics Distribution, outbid over 200 potential buyers and purchased ***Action Comics* #1** for $61,900 at the **Sotheby's** 6th annual two-day comic book auction in New York that began June 28.

*Action Comics* #1, published in June 1938, contains the very first appearance of Superman. It is one of the most sought after comic books in the world with only about 50 believed to exist. Geppi's new addition to his collection is believed to be among the top 10 in terms of condition.

The most expensive purchase of the auction was a **Frank Frazetta** original painting entitled, "Savage World" which sold for $74,000. Other notable sales included a ***Marvel Comics* #1** ($21,850), ***Action Comics* #2** ($16,100) and a **Robert Crumb** *Fritz the Cat* which sold for $56,350, setting a new record for the sale of original cover art. ■ *Matthew Senreich*

## Diamond Distributors Buys Capital City

**Diamond Comics Distributors** acquired one of its largest remaining competitors, **Capital City Distribution**, effective July 26. The purchase surprised most industry observers, even though it was rumored that Capital co-founders **Milton Griepp** and **John Davis** had been seeking a buyer.

The second-largest distributor—**Heroes World**—exclusively handles distribution for all Marvel products only.

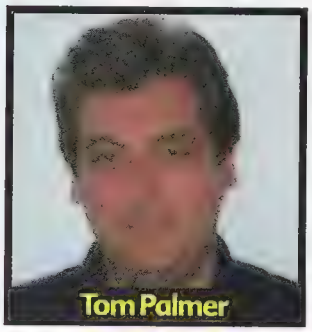
Although many retailers and smaller publishers expressed concern about the de facto, industry-wide exclusivity the move created, Diamond's largest supplier, **DC Comics**, applauded the acquisition. In a written statement, Executive Vice President and Publisher **Paul Levitz** said DC expected the move "to allow Diamond to continue to rebuild and grow the marketplace...." ■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

## Buscema Brothers, Palmer Sever Exclusive Ties With Marvel

Three veteran **Marvel Comics** artists—**John** and **Sal Buscema** and **Tom Palmer Sr.**—have ended their exclusive freelance contracts with the company.

John Buscema, who began his career in the late 1940s at Marvel's predecessor **Timely Comics**, has decided to retire. His work at Marvel includes long stints on ***Avengers***, ***Fantastic Four***, ***Thor*** and ***Conan the Barbarian***.

His brother Sal has already completed two stories for DC Comics—a **New Gods** tale for a holiday special and a **Batman** story scheduled for *Batman Chronicles*. At Marvel, he began as an inker then switched to penciling with stays on ***The Defenders***, ***Captain America***, ***Thor*** and the various **Spider-Man** books.


Tom Palmer

Inker Tom Palmer, a mainstay at Marvel since the late '60s when he inked **Neal Adams'** pencils on the original ***X-Men***, has found work at DC, with a story penciled by **Graham Nolan** set to appear in *Detective Comics* #704. ■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

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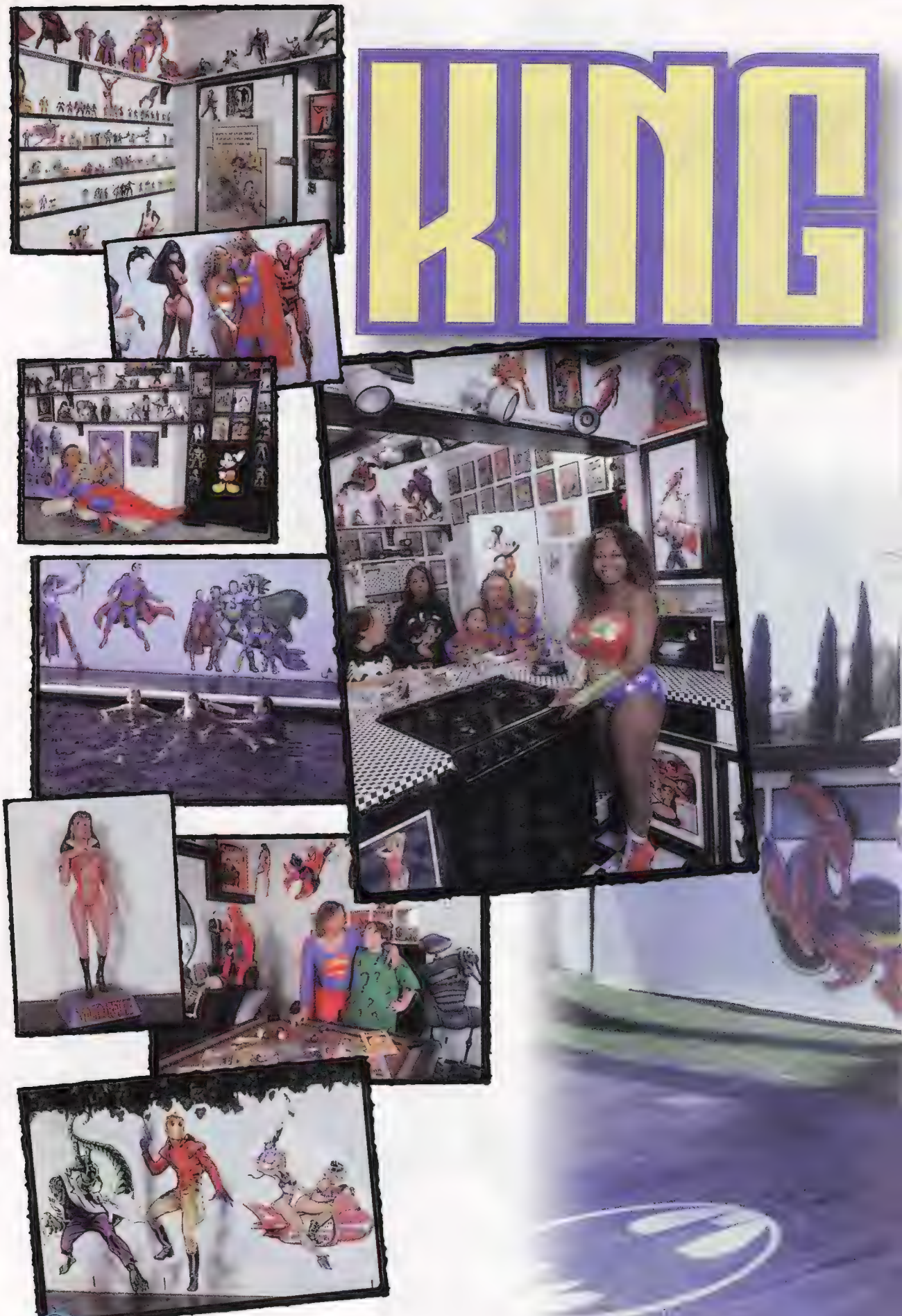
KING

# FANBOY

## Meet Geoffrey Patterson, Comics' No. 1 Fan

Years ago, a car carrying Geoffrey Patterson lost control, careened off the road and was heading for an almost-certain fatal crash. Patterson saw his life flash before his eyes. "All I could think of was the comics I had bought a few days earlier," recalls the 55-year-old Patterson, "and that I would never get to read them."

Welcome to the wild, wild world of Geoffrey Patterson, comics' self-described No. 1 Fan. And the Torrance, Calif., resident, father of five and owner of Geoffrey's Comics in Gardena, Ca., doesn't just talk the talk. The driveway of his middle-class neighborhood digs is painted black with bat symbols on it. Superman and Spider-Man portraits adorn his house walls. Captain America stands defiant on a fence. Inside, comic books in frames

Geoffrey Patterson (and, yeah, that tattoo is real)

By Marc Shapiro • Photos by Jim McHugh

Patterson with his son Geoffrey and his wife Monica

line every inch of wall space. Cut-outs and models can even be found in the bathroom.

"There's more," chuckles Patterson, who began his comics infatuation with *Blackhawk* at age 5. "I've got the Shazam! lightning bolt tattooed on my chest. My wife Monica and I got married in comics [she costumed as Wonder Woman, he as the self-created Captain Greedy and the preacher as Captain Midnight]. My oldest son learned how to read with Richie Rich comics and all through kindergarten he was the only kid who wore a cape."

Needless to say, Patterson's obsession is the talk of his neighborhood. Both good and, in one instance, bad. "There used to be this lady that lived next door, and she didn't like the pictures in the front of the house, so she called the environmental control people. A guy came out, took one look at the house and laughed. He thought it was funny.

"Halloween is big with us," he continues. "We usually get about 500 kids who come around and tour the house. They bring their parents, and they get as big a kick out of it as the kids do."

Patterson, who speaks of classic *Blackhawk* artist Reed Crandell in near-reverential tones, claims to be able to look at any comic and tell you who the artist is and just when he or she drew that issue. He offers that his comic mania boils down to a love and appreciation for the artform.

"I just love this stuff; it means a lot to me. This is a beautiful artform. For some people, art is the 'Mona Lisa.' For me, a woman with a full and interesting figure, with a dinosaur standing in back of her, is art. My house and lifestyle express to me what is beautiful. This is what I've always wanted."

And his love for the comic book form ultimately extends to his wife, who went from being a regular customer at his comic shop to the mother of his last three children. "She's young and sexy," sighs Patterson, with obvious admiration. "For me, she's a comic book character come to life." **W**

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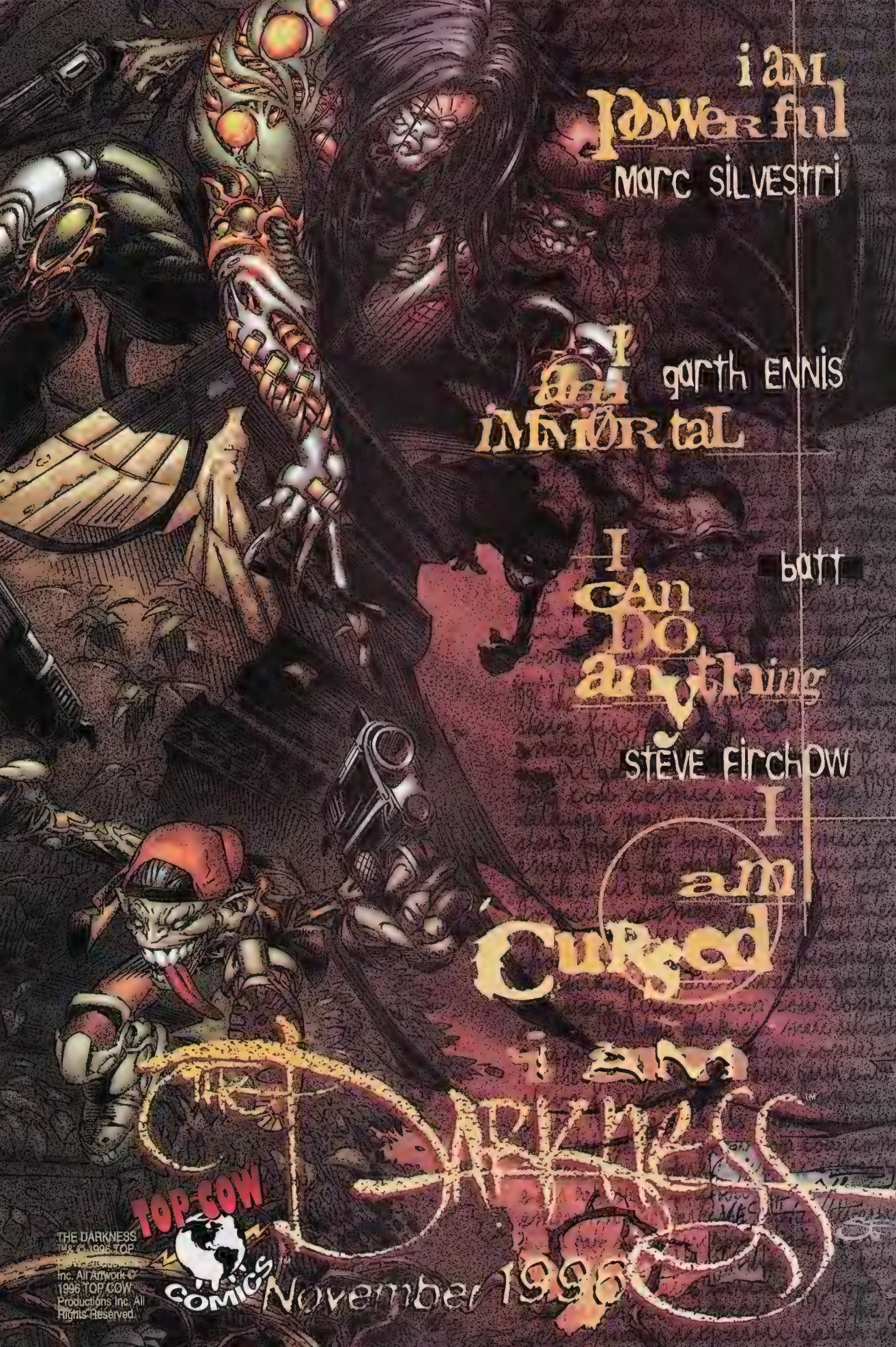
*Marc Shapiro is the self-proclaimed No. 1,462 Comic Fan. He can look at any comic cover and tell you exactly what its cover price is.*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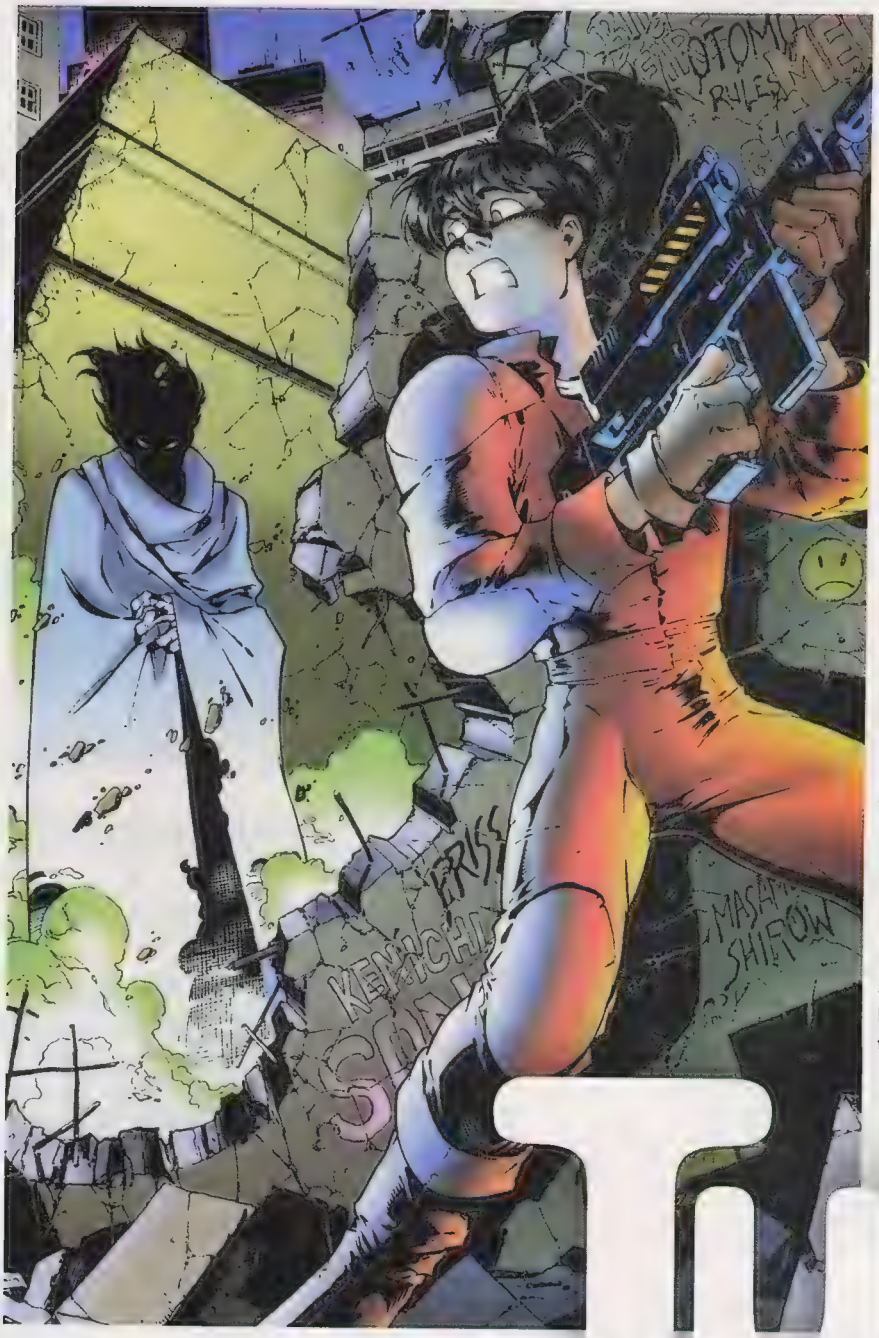


"I just bought everything I laid my hands on," says *Uncanny X-Men* penciler Joe Madureira, who discovered Japanese comics while attending the High School of Art and Design in New York. "I found this great Japanese bookstore and ended up leaving with a ton of stuff, including my favorite, *Gunsmith Cats*. The action and movement were just incredible. I just got hooked on manga—and I haven't stopped."

Madureira is part of a growing number of comics professionals who cite manga (the Japanese term for comic books) and its sister-genre anime (Japanese animation) as some of the strongest influences on their storytelling and artistic styles. Among the most ardent followers of manga and anime are a handful of today's hottest comic book creators, each of whom has helped inject American comics with a little touch of Japan's popular export. Recently, Madureira, along with J. Scott Campbell, Billy Tucci, Humberto Ramos, Brian Pulido and Scott McCloud took time to comment on what they like about anime and manga, which artists inspire them and what the American comic book industry could learn from the Japanese.

# SIX TOP AMERICAN CREATORS GIVE *WIZARD* THE SCOOP ON THE MANGA AND ANIME IMPORTS

By Michael O'Connell

## Joe Madureira

**(penciler of *Uncanny X-Men*)**

**FAVORITE MANGA SERIES:** *Bastard*. The art is incredible. It's very exciting. A fan sent me the entire series of 16 volumes. Another one that I like is *You're Under Arrest!* I just love Kosuke Fujishima's work—the way he draws the characters, the hands, the hair, everything.

**FAVORITE ANIME:** "Giant Robo." It's perfect. Everyone I recommend it to loves it. I've been watching the "Hakkenden." I can't understand what's going on, but it's so cool I keep watching the series.

**MANGA ARTIST YOU FOLLOW:** Masakazu Katsura. He did *Video Girl Ai*, *Shadow Lady* and *D.N.A.*[2], and he designed *Zeiram Iria*.

**MAIN REASON FOR ANIME AND MANGA'S POPULARITY IN AMERICA:** I don't think there's anything we do that compares to it in terms of the excitement factor. When you watch one of their movies, it seems so bizarre. For them, it's not that weird. But for us, it's totally far gone.

**THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MANGA AND AMERICAN COMICS:** In general, the amount of sex and gratuitous nudity in Japanese comics. They're a little bit more risqué. We're really not allowed to show anything. They use a lot less words; it's more art-driven. If you open an American comic, it's filled with words. If you open a Japanese comic, there will be pages and pages that go by with only sound effects.

**WHAT AMERICAN ARTISTS AND PUBLISHERS CAN LEARN FROM MANGA AND ANIME:** I get a lot of ideas from the Japanese stuff. The way the stories are told, costume design, expressions, everything. In "The Age of Apocalypse," I gave Rogue a hairstyle from "Ghost in the Shell." It was the first time that an anime hairdo was given to an American character.

**WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN DOING MANGA OR HAVING YOUR WORK APPEAR IN JAPAN?** I'd love to do something for them. Actually, I'd love to do an issue of *X-Men* in manga style. I would love to do an entire issue, or a character may be having a dream in a total, insane manga style with the huge eyes, no noses and big spiky hair. I love that stuff.

Facing page: Joe Madureira pays tribute to *Akira*'s Katsuhiro Otomo
Left: A frame from "Giant Robo"
Above left: Rogue shows off her manga-style haircut

## J. Scott Campbell

**(penciler of *Gen*[13])**

**FAVORITE MANGA SERIES:** I really enjoyed the *Ghost in the Shell* series, and what I've read of *Appleseed* was pretty interesting. Joe Madureira actually turned me onto *Gunsmith Cats*—that also goes into that same area. The action in those is so great.

**FAVORITE ANIME:** "Battle Angel." It's got a simple premise and the action is just really, really impressive. I also really liked "Ninja Scroll."

**MANGA ARTIST YOU FOLLOW:** Masamune Shirow is easily my favorite of the manga artists. Anything he's done, pretty much, I enjoy.

**MAIN REASON FOR ANIME AND MANGA'S POPULARITY IN AMERICA:** In a time where people were growing frustrated with comic books, I know I had it up to my eyeballs with the cross-hatching, the grinning grimaces and the big guns. I think a lot of people wanted something new—a departure from what they'd already been reading. That influence just found its way into comic books because comic books is a constantly changing, growing medium and it just happened to be the next stage of the evolution.

**THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MANGA AND AMERICAN COMICS:** Mainly the amount of energy that goes into producing background and working machinery. American comics tend to bluff that part of comic books, focusing on the human beings and the facial expressions. The Japanese comics really tend to focus on making believable cityscapes or believable technology. You really get the sense that you're almost in that environment.

Masamune Shirow's *Ghost in the Shell*, one of Campbell's favorites, contains all the necessary ingredients: girls, guns and big robots

WHAT AMERICAN ARTISTS AND PUBLISHERS CAN LEARN FROM MANGA AND ANIME: The artwork itself is something to be admired. I don't know if there is anything to be learned publishing-wise, other than the fact that it is a legitimate influence and something to be reckoned with.

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN DOING MANGA OR HAVING YOUR WORK APPEAR IN JAPAN? I'd be interested, but I probably would never fully draw that way, although there are certainly elements there that I appreciate and use.

## Billy Tucci

**(writer/artist/publisher of *Shi*)**

FAVORITE MANGA SERIES: *Ninja Scroll*—due to the dynamics and the colors, especially. The colors were actually lifted from wood block prints, which gave a real richness to it. Not only with the gracefulness of the characters, but also the personalities which I've found lacking in a lot of manga. You really cared about the characters. That's what struck a chord with me.

FAVORITE ANIME: It's between "Star Blazers" and "Ninja Scroll." I have "Akira" on laserdisc and I watch it constantly because it's a brilliant film. It's good to see that an animated film can be rich and entertaining without the same old Disney formula or the singing and dancing.

MANGA ARTIST YOU FOLLOW: Osamu Tezuka. He's like Jack Kirby. Everything that has come after him has really been pulled from him. You can see his work in *Battle Angel Alita* to *Angel Cop* to *Be Forever Yamato*. [Tezuka's] influence shines through in everybody else's work.

MAIN REASON FOR ANIME AND MANGA'S POPULARITY IN AMERICA: It's fresh, new and exciting. It's very clean. I think that Americans really appreciate clean, fluid, flawless art, which much of the manga has.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MANGA AND AMERICAN COMICS: The Japanese really appreciate the art form much more than Americans do. They'll show a film with an orchestra accompanying the film live. They really appreciate animation as an art form—as opposed to the Americans who take it for granted. Maybe we've been spoiled by Disney. It has always stuck in the American mindset that cartoons are for kids, just like comic books are. We have to find a way to overcome that giant obstacle.

WHAT AMERICAN ARTISTS AND PUBLISHERS CAN LEARN FROM MANGA AND ANIME: A lot of American comic book artists, including myself, could learn to lighten up a little bit. The manga certainly is very entertaining. It just seems so much lighter. In a way, it even seems more human, too. Of course, Japanese artists take themselves just as seriously, but I don't think they wallow in sorrow and pity as much.

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN DOING MANGA OR HAVING YOUR WORK APPEAR IN JAPAN? I'm leaning towards a Japanese animated film. I'd like to show the American public something that they've never seen before—combine "Pocahontas" with "Akira"—the action and the dynamics of a Japanese animated film, but with the characterization given to a Disney character.

## Humberto Ramos

**(penciler of *Impulse*)**

FAVORITE MANGA SERIES: *Video Girl Ai*, *You're Under Arrest* and *Battle Angel Alita*—the manga and anime. I like the dynamic storytelling they have and the stylistic way of drawing the human figure. I work a lot on expressions, so I take a lot of inspiration from manga.

FAVORITE ANIME: "Ninja Scroll." The story is good and the animation is amazing. I particularly like "Plastic Little." The story is really dumb, but I like the animation. And I also like "Macross Plus," "Fatal Fury," "Akira," "Black Magic: M-66" and "Dominion."

MANGA ARTIST YOU FOLLOW: Masamune Shirow—for his backgrounds, the design of machinery, the way he visualizes an alternate future and, of course, the way he draws people.

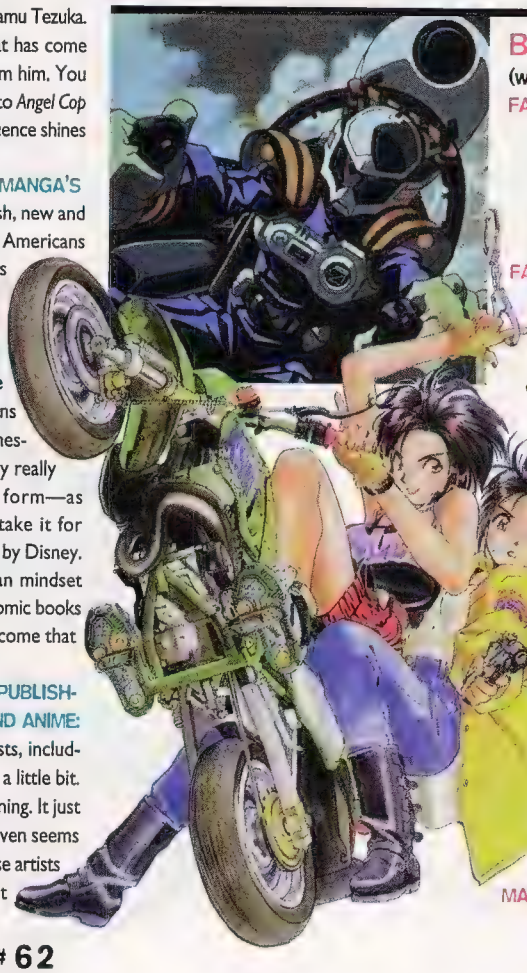
MAIN REASON FOR ANIME AND MANGA'S POPULARITY IN AMERICA: Maybe [they] became popular because of all the movies, TV shows, video games, books and comic books. Everywhere you look, there's manga.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MANGA AND AMERICAN COMICS: The most important difference is the explosive storytelling that the manga have and the more studied or analyzed narrative that we have in Western comic books.

WHAT AMERICAN ARTISTS AND PUBLISHERS CAN LEARN FROM MANGA AND ANIME: I don't know if doing a manga style is a fashion or a style that has arrived and is going to be here forever. I feel attracted to the style, the stories, everything. But I know it's the next step. I don't know what the next step will be after manga. Maybe we'll come back to the softer, American way of doing comic books.

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN DOING MANGA OR HAVING YOUR WORK APPEAR IN JAPAN? I can't go and try to teach the guys who, in some way, I'm learning from. I don't think those people could be too interested in my work in Japan. I just take what I feel I can get from manga, but I don't feel I have this huge manga view in my work.

Below: Frame from "Macross Plus"
Bottom: One of Ramos' favorite manga series, Kosuke Fujishima's *You're Under Arrest!*



## Brian Pulido

**(writer/publisher of *Lady Death*)**

FAVORITE MANGA SERIES: Go Nagai's *Devilman*. He's absolutely savage. He's a regular guy who has a demon inside of him, *and* he's fighting other demonic forces.

FAVORITE ANIME: "Supernatural Beast City" and "Wicked City." I actually like "Giant Robo"—it's just solid. The animation is tremendous. Some of my tastes run to the darker material, but there's a segment of the dark stuff that I'm not too interested in, like "Overfiend." I'm not into violence against women. Some of the more recent stuff I'm catching up on is "My Neighbor Totoro" and "Vampire Hunter D."

MANGA ARTIST YOU FOLLOW: Just about anything that Go Nagai does, I follow like crazy. [His] *Cutey Honey* is fun. She's not as gnarly as *Devilman*, but she does still kick some tail. Of course, Katsuhiro Otomo from *Akira*. What's so incredible is that he builds such a believable reality. As it's torn apart, it wrenches your soul because you're involved with the story and the characters.

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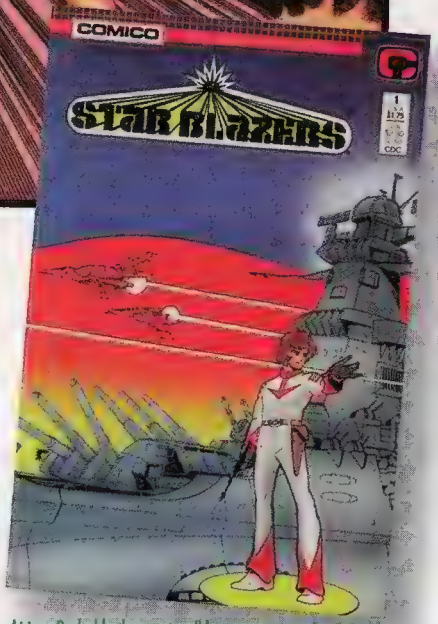


At top: Probably the most well known comic and animated film from Japan, *Akira* is an acknowledged classic
Above: McCloud grew up on *Star Blazers*

**POPULARITY IN AMERICA:** A lot of the companies that are importing the material and dubbing it into English are getting excellent distribution in Blockbuster stores. If you recall, you could only get these things through rotten copies at conventions. Now we're all being exposed to it. We're the generation that has a voracious appetite for media, and this stuff is fresh and crazy.

**THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MANGA AND AMERICAN COMICS:** In part, it's cultural. A lot of our American comics are driven by the "hero's journey"—that mythological concept of the reluctant hero who takes up the heroic mantelpiece and is going to go on an adventure. It seems that we view our comics more in black-and-white [terms]. Manga explores the gray a little more.

**WHAT AMERICAN ARTISTS AND PUBLISHERS CAN LEARN FROM MANGA AND ANIME:** It's a whole different cultural point of view in action, science fiction and entertainment. We see it and inevitably it's really stimulating because it's such a vastly different perspective.

**WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN DOING MANGA OR HAVING YOUR WORK APPEAR IN JAPAN?** Absolutely. One of our dreams would be to have *Lady Death* done as a sweeping, grand epic, animated by the best Japanese animators.

## Scott McCloud

**(writer of *Superman Adventures*)**

**FAVORITE MANGA SERIES:** Osamu Tezuka's *Dororo*. It was a four-volume set about a character going around killing off demons to get back parts of his body. One of my favorite series was *Father and Son*, by the writer/artist team Norio Hayasi and Yasuiti Osima. It featured a whole police department which had the typical variety of characters that you find in a Japanese ensemble book—sort of a "Shonen Street Blues."

**FAVORITE ANIME:** I got hooked on "Star Blazers" when I was younger. I really like "My Neighbor Totoro." I love the animation, but I don't seek it out in the same sense that I do with the comics. I see the comics as iron ore that I can make steel from. Whereas with the animation, I'm just a consumer. It's good imagination fodder.

**MANGA ARTIST YOU FOLLOW:** I'm very fond of Osamu Tezuka's work. He did about 150,000 pages of comics from World War II to the late '80s. His official moniker is the "God of Manga." [Manga artists] become "sensei" so early in life, that they have to have these continually escalating superlatives. He got the best. We call Jack Kirby "The King of Comics," and Osamu means "king." So his name is "king," but he's a "god."

**MAIN REASON FOR ANIME AND MANGA'S POPULARITY IN AMERICA:** I think the Japanese figured out how to make comics a visceral, exciting experience. When you dive into the world of Japanese comics, you feel like you've entered that world. It's not a surface thing; it's participatory. That's very powerful.

**THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MANGA AND AMERICAN COMICS:** I think there are some fundamental storytelling approaches that still separate the two cultures. We're beginning to pick up some of them. There are 10 different strategies that Japanese comic artists employ in their storytelling toolbox, most of which contribute to the sense of reader involvement.

**WHAT AMERICAN ARTISTS AND PUBLISHERS CAN LEARN FROM MANGA AND ANIME:** Whenever different cultures that have evolved in isolation from each other begin to exchange ideas, both invariably benefit. I'd like to see world comics. I'd like to see artists who are creating for a world audience, creating things with universal appeal.

**WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN DOING MANGA OR HAVING YOUR WORK APPEAR IN JAPAN?** As for original work, their industry may be a better machine, but I don't have any desire to be a cog in it. On the other hand, my book *Understanding Comics* is supposed to be translated into Japanese soon. That'll be our 10th language. Personally, I wish we could have better access to each other's best work. Someday, perhaps, we could have truly international artists. W

*Michael O'Connell doesn't want to be a cog in any machine, either. He'd much rather be a Spacely Sprocket.*

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Wizard *casts the* Kingdom Come *movie!*

# Casting Call

With a tense story and realistic art style, it makes perfect sense to do a movie based on *Kingdom Come*. Since Alex Ross painted these heroes to look like regular folks, it'd be a cinch to cast. So we did.

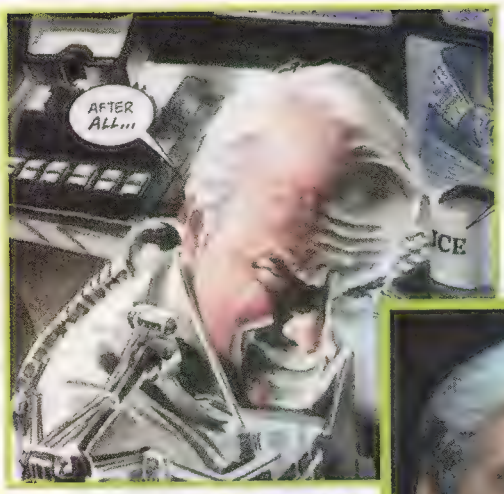
First of all, we'd have a big budget and we'd get those ILM special effects gurus to create the Flash's speed effects and the monstrous Hawkman. As for the rest of the casting...well, whaddaya think?

**SUPERMAN**

Robert Urich ("Lazarus Man") is beefy enough to play the aging Man of Steel. Slick his hair back and you've got Clark Kent.

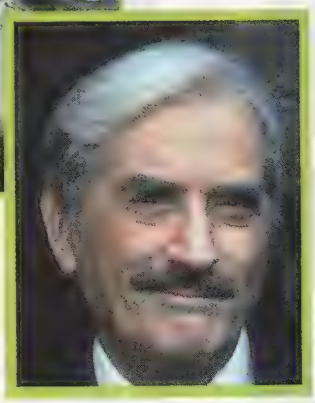
**By a bunch of *Wizard* staffers**

All photos: Everett Collection, unless otherwise noted.




## WONDER WOMAN

Lynda Carter, who played the heroine in the 1970s TV show, is still hot as hell and can easily pick up the golden lasso of our favorite Amazon. Heck, she's got a lotta practice.

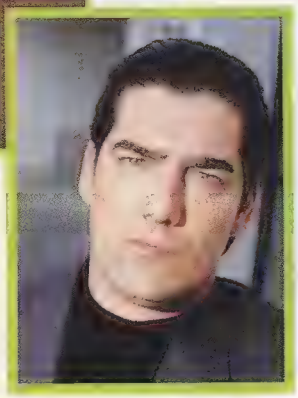


## BATMAN

Gregory Peck ("Other People's Money") looks like he was actually the base model for the much-older Bruce Wayne.

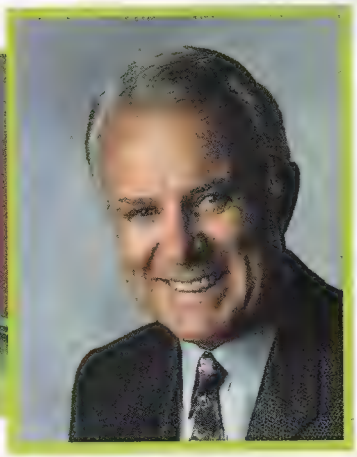
## AQUAMAN

Besides looking just like Arthur, Richard Harris ("The Field") has the regal look to him that befits the king of the seven seas.



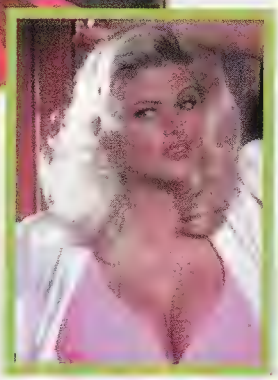
## CAPTAIN MARVEL

Ken Wahl ("Wiseguy") has the slicked hair, the narrow eyes and the chiseled face of the World's Mightiest Mortal. Plus, he looks diabolical enough to do Cap proud.



## GREEN LANTERN

Robert Conrad ("Wild Wild West") still looks like he can fight evil with the best of 'em. Give him a power ring and the guy's unstoppable.

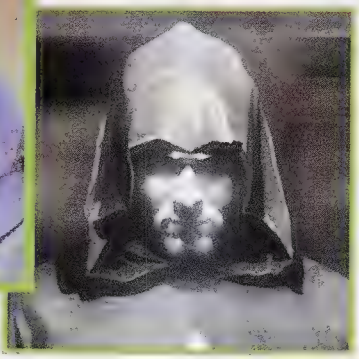


### POWER GIRL

*Playboy* model Anna Nicole Smith has the, um, build for this brickhouse of a heroine. Of course, she'll apparently have to lose some weight for the role…

### OLIVER QUEEN

Sean Connery ("The Rock") can pull off being the gruff bowman–the type of character he seems right for. All he has to do is hide that accent of his.

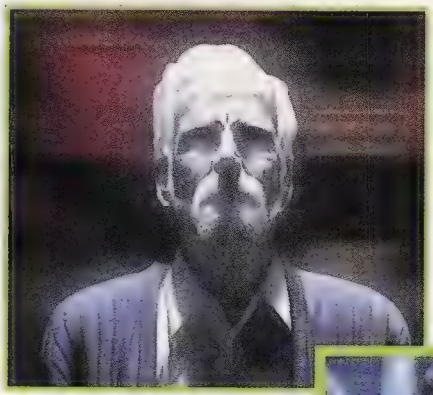


### THE SPECTRE

A pro at being a cryptic character, Leonard Nimoy ("Star Trek") can work similar magic as the guy who enacts the wrath of God.

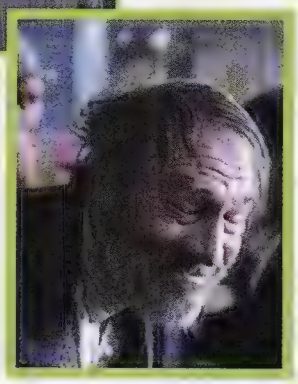
### MAGOG

As the hero-gone-overboard, Richard Burgi ("The Sentinel") has that edge in his eyes that makes him look like he could ace the Joker in a heartbeat.



### REVEREND NORMAN MOGAT

Christopher Plummer ("Star Trek VI") can give that "Holee bejeezus, I'm talking to the Spectre" look like few others. Plus, he's a good actor and can pull off being the narrator of this story.



### LEX LUTHOR

Geez, this rendition of Lex screams hardass. And if there's one thing Lawrence Tierney ("Reservoir Dogs") has proven, he can be one. And hey, he's bald, which is always a plus. W

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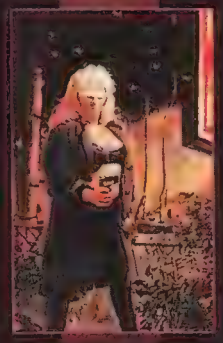

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BIG ENTERTAINMENT

# THE MAIN EVENT

## WHY A SPAWN/SPIDER-MAN CROSSOVER MUST BE MADE

# By Scott Beatty

**For comic books, the 1990s has been the decade of the crossover. So far, we've seen just about every inter-company crossover the collective comics industry can throw at us—except one: SPAWN AND SPIDER-MAN.**

**Fans want it. We want it. But will we ever see a Spawn/Spider-Man crossover? You bet.**

**Why? Because it would be the team-up of two of comics' hottest properties—characters that have never crossed paths before! And you know something else? We will make it happen. Still not convinced? Let's further prove our point...**

## Why It Should Happen

Quite simply, fans wanna see it—more so than any *Marvel versus DC* or *X-Men/WildC.A.T.s* collaboration. It's the ultimate no-brainer. Throw Todd McFarlane into the mix—which fans wouldn't have any other way—and you've got instant history.

As many readers already know, Todd McFarlane not only created Spawn, but he also helped reinvigorate Spider-Man by drawing *Amazing Spider-Man* back in 1988. This eventually gave him the clout to launch a brand new Spider-title—*Spider-Man*—two years later, which set single sales records with its first issue and helped build his massive fan following. (Fans also will note the great similarities in the headpieces of both Spidey and Spawn—coincidence?)

Would Spawn and Spider-Man team up to fight evil or beat the crap out of each other?

# "If you're asking whether I might consider doing a Spawn/Spider-Man crossover, yeah, sure."

**—Todd McFarlane**

In 1992, McFarlane exited Marvel to help form Image Comics and launch his own *Spawn*, a character that had been gathering dust in his portfolio. For fans, it might well have been gold dust. Since its inception nearly five years ago, *Spawn* has been a consistent Top 10 seller—in fact, an estimated two million copies of *Spawn* #1 sold immediately, setting an independent publishing sales record.

The popularity of Spawn helped McFarlane achieve his first big crossover with 1994's *Spawn/Batman* with DC. Currently, Spawn has new spin-off series right around the corner in the form of *Curse of the Spawn*, *Spawn the Impaler* and *Angela*, as well as a big-budget movie *and* an HBO animated series. So now McFarlane's favorite hellspawn is giving fans everything they could ask for—*except* for that one li'l story.

For industry insider Bill Liebowitz, owner of the Golden Apple Comics retail store chain in Los Angeles, Calif., *Spawn/Spider-Man* would be the biggest and best comics "event" to date. "This has been on everybody's wish list since Image was formed," says Liebowitz. "The most obvious argument *for* it is that Todd's biggest successes have been with *Spawn* and his work on *Spider-Man*. The combination of the two would be the 'dream team' of comicdom. It might even give Todd the chance to do the things he's always wanted to do with Spider-Man."

And if that isn't enough, even the competition believes such a crossover

should happen. "I think it would be cool to see Todd doing Spider-Man again," says DC Comics Executive Editor Mike Carlin. "That's part of the fun of a lot of these projects—matching the talent according to which characters you're using. Part of the fun of having Superman meeting Spider-Man [from the classic *Superman Versus Spider-Man*] in the old days, was having Ross Andru do it because he'd drawn both characters. The same holds true for Todd now."

And McFarlane returning to draw Spidey in a crossover isn't out of the question. He himself recently said that he still has a great deal of affection for Spidey, whose last big wave of popularity, by and large, began with McFarlane's run on the character eight years ago. A *Spawn/Spider-Man* match-up is certainly one that McFarlane would have little trouble psyching himself to write and draw. "To me, I really only scratched the surface of Spider-Man," McFarlane recently said. "If [Marvel] ever said, 'Todd, you can do Spider-Man and run wild with him,' I'd *still* make changes."

Marvel's reasons for doing the crossover, however, just might be to give the Spider-titles the shot in the arm they so desperately need. Since the ill-conceived Spider-Clone storyline over the course of the past year-and-a-half, sales of all the Spider-titles have plummeted (reportedly the lowest figures in the character's history). The Clone story slapped Spider-fans in the face by revealing that the Peter Parker/Spider-Man they had followed since 1975 wasn't the real deal, but instead was a clone of the real Spider-Man. Many readers dropped the books in protest. Marvel has recently announced an about-face by setting plans in motion to return Parker to the role of Spider-Man this fall.

But can Spider-Man wait that long? That's a big gamble, especially for fans who might not be so willing to take a second chance on the classic Marvel property. As Liebowitz argues, however, *Spawn/Spider-Man* could be the one deciding factor that puts Spidey back on top while introducing Spawn to new readers. "I know a lot of fans have become disenchanted with Spider-Man—a boost like this could really help the titles," says Liebowitz. "Something like *Spawn/Spider-Man* could excite comics enough to bring back the old fans and bring over the new fans who believe comics actually began with *Spawn*."

Surely Marvel would agree that a crossover of this magnitude would spark fan interest in Spider-Man once again. However, there is one very major issue holding back an inevitable team-up—namely, Todd McFarlane's reluctance to work with Marvel.

# Pick-A-Plot

**Just to make it easier for the Spawn/Spidey crossover to happen, *Wizard* came up with four basic plots for a *Spawn/Spider-Man* crossover, then slapped 'em on our "Wizard World" forum on America Online and let the fans decide which was best. The plots are as follows:**

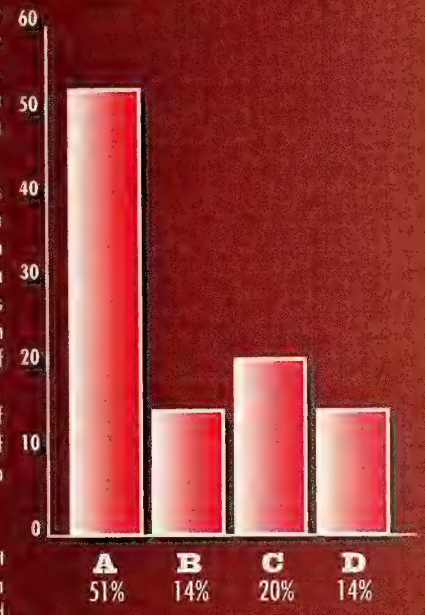
**A.** A Hellspawn (not Al Simmons) escapes Hell, but is rejected by his symbiote suit and left to die upon reaching Earth. Needing a human host, the Spawn symbiote happens upon Eddie Brock and bonds with him and the Venom symbiote, creating a monstrous Venom/Spawn creature. Learning of Spider-Man through its connection to Brock, the costume sets off in search of Spidey to bond itself to an even stronger human host.

Meanwhile, Al Simmons senses the presence of another Hellspawn up and about, heads off in search of this other Spawn, bumps into Spidey and the two team up to duke it out with the super-powerful Venom/Spawn!

**B.** Peter Parker and reporter Ben Urich are out investigating reports of a supernatural creature lurking in New York's alleys. After questioning P.I.'s Twitch and Burke, Parker senses they're hiding something, plants a spider-tracer on Burke and later follows them to an abandoned warehouse. There, it turns out Twitch and Burke were on to a group of satanic cultists responsible for a rash of child-kidnappings. As the P.I.'s (and Spidey) move in, the cultists succeed in summoning the Phlebiac Brothers (minus the Violator). Startled by Twitch & Burke, the cultists break the containment circle around the demons, releasing them. As Spidey fights his losing battle to keep the demons at bay, the cavalry arrives in the form of Spawn and the Violator, both of whom sensed the arrival of the Phlebiac Brothers.

**C.** Angela's in town looking to put the kibosh on Demogoblin, wanting to rid the Earth of his demonic presence. After a fierce battle, Angela k.o.'s the goblin, and as she moves in for the kill, Spidey arrives. Failing to convince her that killing is wrong, Spidey must resort to force to stop her. After a rough-and-tumble slugfest, Angela (weakened from her battle with Demogoblin) is defeated by Spider-Man. As Spidey moves in to see if Angela's okay, Spawn arrives to see Web-Head standing over Angela's unconscious, battered body. Assuming that Spidey is bad news, Spawn sets his sights on smearing the wall-crawler across the sidewalk.

**D.** After a battle with the Redeemer, a weakened Spawn is attacked by the Carnage symbiote (after escaping confinement, minus Cletus Kassidy). Taken by surprise, the Spawn symbiote is forced off of Al Simmons, but not before "hearing" of the Carnage symbiote's hatred for Spider-Man and of its multiple defeats at his hand. As the Carnage-controlled Al Simmons goes on a murderous rampage, the Spawn symbiote goes in search of the one man who can help: Spidey. After a brief tussle, the Spawn symbiote bonds with Spidey, explains all that has transpired and fully bonds with him! Can Spider-Spawn put an end to the rampage of terror that Carnage-Spawn is spreading across New York?




Fans seemed to overwhelmingly love Plot A, mainly because, as one fan posted, "it involves one of Spidey's better villains...Venom!"

Fans of plot C felt the others had too much mixing of symbiote and stuff. One fan posted, "Plot C is a plain, to-the-point, good story with a good ol' slugfest in between. To put it modestly: I want this crossover!! My two favorite characters head on!!"

**We also asked the following Spawn/Spider-Man questions:**

• Who would you like to see draw the Spawn/Spider-Man crossover: Todd McFarlane (84%), John Romita Jr. (11%), Greg Capullo (5%) or Tony Daniel (0%)?

The insane response to McFarlane drawing this crossover came down to one simple thing, according to one fan, "Todd McFarlane should draw the crossover because, frankly, he's the best."

**"HE'S THE BEST."**

• Who would you like to see write the Spawn/Spider-Man crossover: Alan Moore (37%) Todd McFarlane (25%), Peter David (25%) J.M. DeMatteis (13%)?

Fans liked Alan Moore's style of writing because, according to one fan's post, "His style fits with the dark, sinister mood of Spawn, and would be an interesting contrast to Spidey's."

McFarlane did have his fans though. One posted, "Todd McFarlane should also write the comic. I mean, just think what he did with the Lizard, and now he has Spawn!" ■ ***Sorrell Booke***

## Why It Hasn't Happened

McFarlane's bitter divorce from Marvel was well-publicized, and he has gone on record to state his mistrust of the comic industry's Big Two—Marvel and DC—despite having pulled off *Spawn/Batman* with the latter. "If I'm bull-headed about one thing, it's my whole militant attitude that Marvel and DC on some level are still the enemy," McFarlane has said.

But, would McFarlane ever swallow his pride and return to Marvel? "Never say never," McFarlane told *Wizard* recently. "If Image collapsed, I'd try to call in every favor from every industry that I've ever worked with, and if they all slammed the door in my face—if I had no choice—then I'd go, 'Well, time to eat some crow.' But I've got too many opportunities right now.

"Now, if you're asking whether I might someday consider doing a *Spawn/Spider-Man* crossover, yeah, sure. But that's just giving the comic book community something it wants to see and declaring a partial truce for five seconds," he added.

Going back as far as 1994, McFarlane admitted a desire to see a *Spawn/Spider-Man* happen—in fact, he said the concept predated the *Spawn/Batman* match-up.

And as Liebowitz explains, Spawn hasn't been run through the crossover mill like other characters—which leads us to this whole "dream team" shebang. "I think Todd did *Spawn/Batman* for personal reasons, because he loved the characters and it gave him a chance to work with [*Spawn/Batman* writer] Frank Miller," he says. "*Spawn/Witchblade* happened because both are obviously hot properties. It's helped that Todd has held out and not done a lot of crossovers. *Spawn/Spider-Man* is the one that every fan has waited for. And again, I think that this would be looked at as less a crossover than an 'event'—*the* McFarlane event—a chance to flex his muscles."

Current Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras was unavailable for comment on the willingness of Marvel to allow *Spawn/Spider-Man* to happen—or whether or not McFarlane would be welcome to return to the Marvel fold for "five minutes." But Marvel has publicly said in the past that a *Spawn/Spider-Man* team-up is open for discussion.

Whether that attitude still exists has not been confirmed, but if McFarlane's fellow Image co-founders Rob Liefeld and Jim Lee have proven anything in their "Heroes Reborn" deal with Marvel, you definitely *can* go home again. Where Lee and Liefeld's deal actually involves making over the Marvel Universe by re-tooling its core characters, a *Spawn/Spider-Man* crossover merely asks Marvel and McFarlane to bring fandom its most requested one-shot. So why not declare that truce?

## The Definitive Comics Event

In the end, *Spawn/Spider-Man* is the one crossover that would do the comics industry a world of good. Still pulling itself up from a downward turn in sales and interest, comics as a whole needs the buzz that such a crossover would certainly generate. "The sales potential and importance of this would eclipse all other so-called comic book 'events,' " says Liebowitz. "And anything that can generate interest in the industry certainly gets my vote."

But for readers, the best thing about a *Spawn/Spider-Man* match-up is how much fun it would be just to see it happen. Carlin views *Spawn/Spider-Man* in those same simple terms. "Personally, I don't read *Spawn* or the Spider-Man books, but I would read *that* crossover," he says. "It's already outstanding in terms of being an 'event'—more than just a simple issue of either title. It's never happened before, and theoretically, it'll never happen again." **W**

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*Scott Beatty wants to see* Spawn/Spider-Man *happen just so he can say, "I told ya so!" and then grin like he just let one rip. (Additional reporting by Rogers Cadenhead and Tom Russo.)*

# If You Send It, They Will Team

"Comics fans have proven that *en masse*, they can be a force to be reckoned with," Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras once intoned. And he's right.

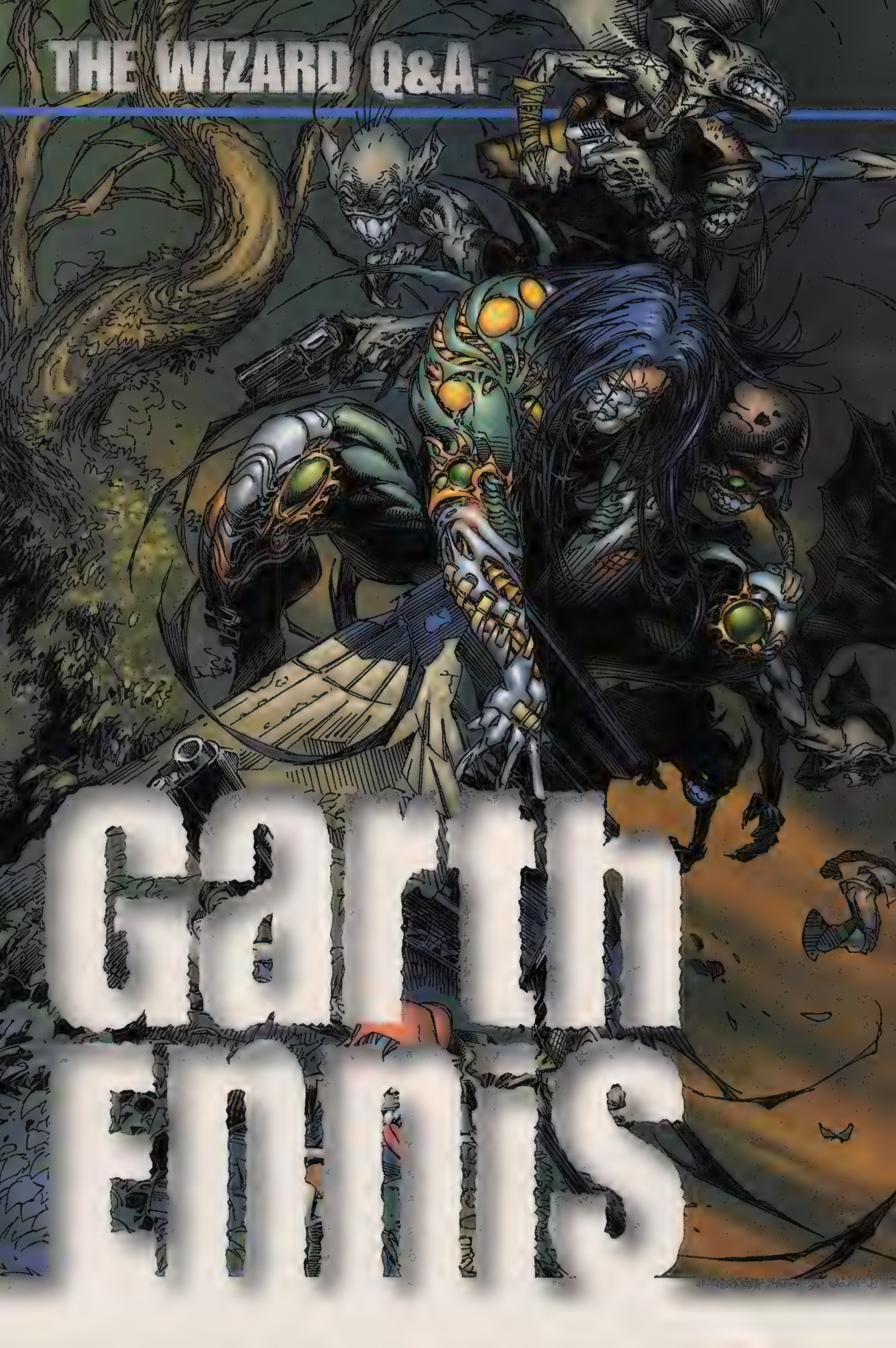
And while *Wizard* can argue every reason why *Spawn/Spider-Man* should take place, analyses like this don't have the same creative punch as a fan letter—or *thousands* of fan letters. Heck, even Marvel listened to the power of the mighty pen when fans complained about the Spider-Clone, making an about-face on the whole story.

In an industry desiring to cater to its audience's wants and needs, it's ultimately up to the fans to pull *Spawn/Spider-Man* off. So, *Wizard* is including postcards in this very issue, designed solely for all you fans to speak your minds—and announce once and for all your desires to see this project happen. Send 'em to us, and we'll see that the publishers get them dropped off in big, hefty mail sacks—right on their desks! If that doesn't show 'em we mean business, nothing will. So fill 'em out and send, send, send! Because if you send it, they will team! ■ *Scott Beatty*

**If you like what you see here, make it happen!**

MARVEL COMICS

The four-part story of "Revelations" begins in SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #240, continues through SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN #11 and AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #418, and comes to its shocking conclusion in SPIDER-MAN #75!


THE WIZARD Q&A:
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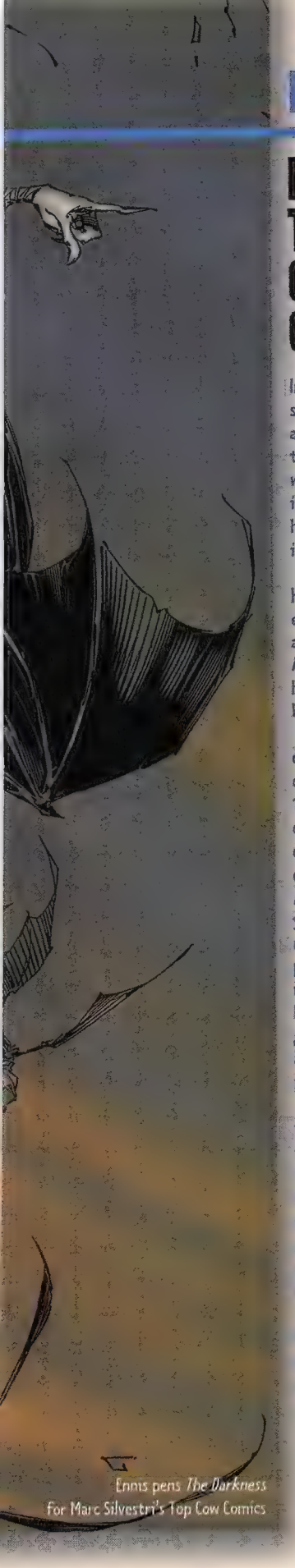

Ennis pens *The Darkness* for Marc Silvestri's Top Cow Comics

BY TOM RUSSO

# FROM THE PERVERSE *PREACHER* TO THE SUPERHEROIC *WILDC.A.T.S*, OFFBEAT WRITER GARTH ENNIS CONTINUES TO SHOCK READERS

In writer Garth Ennis' monthly Vertigo comics mind-screw *Preacher*, protagonist Jesse Custer finds a guardian angel in, of all people, John Wayne. Possessed by a mysterious entity that's equal parts good and evil, Jesse wends his way through a devilishly twisted world, looking for God, looking for answers—and looking just over his shoulder for a morale boost from the Duke whenever it all gets to be too much.

Ennis, you'd like to think, must be similarly inspired. How else could he possibly capture the spirit of the legendary West so romantically, so vividly—while sitting at a keyboard in Northern Ireland, no less? Of course, *Preacher* is also so raucously over the top in its (man-) handling of violence and sex, it makes the wild, wild West look like a Girl Scouts jamboree by comparison.

Not that this is exactly news to longtime readers of DC's *Hellblazer*, where Ennis, 26, first made his mark on American comics with a 43-issue run that began in 1991. Born in Belfast and raised in the nearby suburb of Holywood—"with one 'l' "—Ennis had been plying the comics trade ever since he was 19, when he dropped out of a local university after just three months. *Hellblazer*, though, opened new doors: Within a couple of years, DC also had him writing *The Demon*, and he soon moved into the creator-owned arena when the company's Vertigo imprint greenlighted *Preacher*. More recently, Ennis launched the Demon-spawned superhero title *Hitman*, about a Gotham City assassin who gained x-ray vision and telepathic powers when attacked by alien parasites in *The Demon Annual* #2, part of 1993's "Bloodlines" crossover.

*Wizard* recently zipped across the Atlantic (through the magic of long-distance fiber-optics, anyway) to peer inside Ennis' head. Of course, with that great Irish brogue of his, his voice has a tendency to rise when he wraps up his sentences, almost as though he's tacking on a question mark at the end. What you get, then, is a sense that rather than explaining to you where all his fantastically demented ideas spring from, he's asking you. Well, hell, Garth, we don't know—you tell us. Here, he does.

***WIZARD:* Call us impulsive, but we've got to know right up front: Where did the *Preacher* character Arseface come from?**

GARTH ENNIS: Ah, Arseface. I suppose he grew out of the worrying tendency that a lot of impressionable young people have to follow their heroes into suicide, which is the crappiest, most unimaginative thing I think you can possibly do. If you're going to kill yourself because you've got inoperable cancer and you're in an enormous amount of pain, then it's more than understandable. If, on the other hand, it's because daddy won't give you the keys to the car that night, and life is just so unfair and some miserable bloody singer who hasn't discovered soap is telling you that suicide is a good idea—and *then* you go and get a bottle of sleeping pills—then, to be honest, I'm not terribly impressed. But the nice thing about Arseface is that he's been traumatized into becoming probably the most positive character in the book. He's decent, kind, thoughtful—probably the boy that all the girls would want to bring home to introduce to their mothers. If it wasn't for the fact that his face looks like an arse.

**Where did you get your inspiration for *Preacher* as a whole?**

The real inspiration just comes from me wanting to write a comic for me, one that deals with all the things I'm interested in. It's not a superhero comic, so I don't have to filter any ideas I have through the superhero medium. It doesn't pander to anyone's preconceptions of what any particular kind of comic should be about, be it action or horror or romance. It's somewhere I can tell the stories I want to tell, with as little interference as possible. I think if it was strictly up to my editor, he'd let me get away with bloody murder. [*Laughs*]

**What are some of the things that just won't fly with DC?**

Well, any level of violence seems to be okay. I haven't yet found anything that they'll draw back from. But when it comes to portraying sex, you have to be *very* careful. And actually, with *Preacher* and a lot of the Vertigo books, I get the feeling that we're probably getting away with stuff [the ownership is] unaware of.

**Why do you think it is that *Preacher*, more so than *Hellblazer*, is the book that really put you, artist Steve Dillon and cover artist Glenn Fabry in the spotlight?**

*Preacher* just seems to have caught people's imagination and touched on a lot of what's hip at the minute. The extreme nature of the material, the sense that anything can happen anytime, the dark humor—all that has been popular in the past two or three years. With *Hellblazer*, really, we were just another team on the book. Our work seems to have gone over well with a lot of people, but there had been people writing and drawing Constantine before, and there would be afterward.

**How do you respond to readers who get on you for all the violence in *Preacher*, or the way you deal with religion in the book?**

Well, we haven't had too much trouble. There have been a couple of cases where people kicked up a bit of fuss, but people who don't like the book tend to drop it pretty quickly. And as for those who are worried that *Preacher* has some kind of an effect on its supposedly gullible read-

ership, well, I clearly don't agree with that kind of thinking at all. If the book affected behavior, we would now have 50,000 more lunatics in the world running around killing people and shooting each other's faces off and doing dreadful things—and we quite plainly don't. I'm a great believer in the idea that anyone who goes nuts does so because of their own upbringing and environment, not because of something they read.

**Name:** Garth Ennis
**Occupation:** Writer
**Born:** Jan. 16, 1970 in Belfast, Northern Ireland
**Base of Operations:** Belfast, Northern Ireland
**Career Highlights:** A popular run on Vertigo's *Hellblazer*, co-creating *Preacher* with artist Steve Dillon, co-creating *Hitman* with artist John McCrea and writing *The Darkness* for artist Marc Silvestri.

**Have you taken any heat at all from organized religious groups?**

No, and I'm very much hoping we don't, because that is where we could run into trouble. You know what evangelists and people like that are like—they're the sort who tend to sink their teeth in and not let go. That could be the kind of situation where we really find out what DC and Vertigo's commitment is to this kind of material, how far they're prepared to support us. I've got my fingers crossed on that one.

**You said in *Preacher*'s letters column that while you have put Tulip through the wringer, as a general rule, you recoil from depicting violence against women in your stories.**

Pretty much. I'm not about to turn around and tell other people that they can't portray that; it's just something I find unpleasant, and therefore tend to avoid.

It's funny that you mention the letter column, though, because I probably get censored there more than anywhere else in the book. I'm told that because the column is seen as the voice of the company, the "official line"—even though I'm the one actually writing it—I have to be more careful there. So for instance, there was going to be a letter column competition once where, to win a script, you had to come up with a method for self-crucifixion. You know, how do you get that third nail in, that kind of thing. But they were worried people would go out and try it. [*Laughs*] So then I came up with the idea of, "Complete the following sentence in no more than 20 words: I want to have sex with Mother Teresa because..." And they nixed that as well. As a friend of mine said, maybe they were worried people would go out and try that too. [*Laughs*] So that became the "I want to have sex with Arseface because..." competition, which was a roaring success.

**With the characterization skills you've got, you could probably work in any medium you want. Why comics?**

Back when I started at this seven years ago, I was at Queen's University of Belfast having a miserable time, but I couldn't for the life of me imagine how to get out of there, get a job and support myself. I had always wanted to be a writer, but journalism was quite clearly too tough for me to get into just starting from scratch. And I didn't want to do some nine-to-five grind. So I submitted a proposal for a story about the troubles in Northern Ireland to a British political comic called *Crisis*, and they picked up on it. I had read comics before, but it was only recently that I'd learned that you could make a living at it. I'd always read *2000 A.D.* as a kid, but I knew nothing about American comics. Then I started to read things like *Watchmen*, *V for Vendetta*, *The Dark Knight Returns*, *Elektra* and *Concrete*, and that's when I saw that publishers were taking advantage of

**"I'M A GREAT BELIEVER IN THE IDEA THAT ANYONE WHO GOES NUTS DOES SO BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN UPBRINGING AND ENVIRONMENT, NOT BECAUSE OF SOMETHING THEY READ."**

comics as a medium, realizing that you can tell any kind of story with comics, just as you can with any other medium. And that's how I ended up writing comics. As for screenplays and things like that, yeah, I'd like to have a go at it, but I suppose I'll wait till I'm asked.

**Does being Irish color the work you do? That leprechaun-stomping scene in *Medieval Spawn/Witchblade* was tough to miss...**

I've wanted to show something like that for some time—little *bastards*! [*Laughs*] But yeah, I think it does inevitably. Growing up in Northern Ireland, you're subjected to two political and national cultures: British and Irish. There are things I like in both, there are things in both that I think are quite shameful. British history has a lot of rather dark corners. Ireland's inability to escape the influence of the Catholic Church is not something I'm terribly impressed by either. But as I say, coming from Ireland, it's impossible to avoid these influences. So the idea of Irishness, of an Irish identity, is something I don't struggle too strongly to get away from. Take Cassidy, for instance. I just like the idea of an Irish vampire, a guy who, as we'll learn in issues #25 and #26 of *Preacher*, was actually turned into a vampire during the Irish Republican Easter uprising in Dublin in 1916. I thought that would be interesting because there's a whole lot of Irish Republican history that can be tapped into that way. And there's also the whole hedonistic, eternal partygoer element to Cassidy's character, which I don't think anyone would deny has always been a strong part of Irish identity.

**You've got a *Hellblazer* one-shot called Heartland scheduled for early next year. Why did you leave the book in the first place, and what brought you back?**

I left *Hellblazer* because it was just time to go. I'd said everything I wanted to say with the character at that point. I think that with a book as good as that, when you're just turning it out for the money, that's doing the character and the book a real disservice. But I always felt there was more to tell about Constantine's ex-girlfriend, Kit, who left him at the end of my run on the book with Steve [Dillon]. I wrote *Heartland* two years ago, and it's really just her story. No John Constantine, no magic, no horror. It's just her trying to survive on her own, and the troubles she has with her family—a contemporary story of everyday Belfast folk. And as for going back to *Hellblazer*, well, yeah, he's a character that I would always feel comfortable writing. I can't think of another, certainly in terms of company-owned characters, that I would prefer.

**Why is that?**

He's morally adaptable, and then some. He doesn't have some sort of preconceived code that he feels he has to live by—not like someone like Batman. Constantine reminds me of people I know, and sometimes of myself. He acts the way real people act. He can never be counted on to do what's predictable.

**You've said *Preacher* has nothing to do with *Hellblazer*—and yet Genesis, the angelic/demonic entity that gives Jesse his powers, appears to have roots tracing directly back to *Hellblazer*.**

Lots of people seem to think that. Because I once did a storyline about an angel and a demon having a love affair in *Hellblazer*, and their child was never seen, people assumed that Genesis must be the same character. It's not. There's no link other than me wanting to go back and reuse an old idea. It was just one of those back-burner ideas where you think, "Well, I must either go back and sort that out someday or use it somewhere else."

**Your work on *The Demon* seemed to be more humor-driven and slightly less Ennis-brand violent. Was that something very deliberate on your part?**

I think the humorous tone of the book had already been set by [previous *Demon* writer] Alan Grant. I enjoyed a lot of the stuff Alan had written, so I certainly had no problem with continuing in that vein. And once it became obvious that the sales figures on the thing were going down the toilet, [artist] John McCrea and I were just sort of told, "All right, lads, go as mad as you want." And that's why the whole thing turned into that last four-episode story, which was just this madcap parody of every war movie you've ever seen. We had so much fun on that because, really, there was no one saying no to us. There was one thing that we couldn't get off with, though: We had one demon called Baytor, and at the end of the book, he became king of Hell. So there was a scene where all the demons gathered around him and screamed, "All hail the master Baytor!" Practically at the last minute, someone realized this and pulled it. But I had a lot of fun on *The Demon*, definitely. And the nicest thing about it was that we were able to bring Hitman out of it, and that seems to be going well for us now.

Facing page: Ennis tells the tale of DC's *Hitman*
Below: DC's *The Demon*

# Ennis, Anyone?

You've got to figure that if a comic book writer is knocking out stories about sexual hitmen named Bob and Freddy, it means one of two things: either the well is *completely* dry…or he's just getting warmed up. Guess which holds true for Garth Ennis? The following list of coming attractions offers a hint:

**Preacher** Issue #19 kicks off the six-part "Crusaders" story arc, in which Cassidy is a prisoner of the Grail, and it's up to Jesse to pull his vampire fat out of the hellfire. "God gets involved, we get a little background on the Genesis entity and we meet Frankie the Eunuch. There's really a mix of all the usual violence and black humor and perverted sex that *Preacher* readers have come to know and love." Cassidy's origin tale will immediately follow (see main story), with Tulip's planned for the third year of the book.

**Hitman** The assassin telepath Tommy Monaghan gets into his fair share of trouble as well, Ennis says. "I'm currently creating a superhero team called Section 8, which you'll probably see in the book sometime around the middle of next year. They're slightly unusual—a team of alcoholic and mentally unstable supercharacters." Issues #10-#12 guest-star Green Lantern, and see a government agency try to, er, persuade Monaghan to become their chief assassin. Monaghan's old pal Etrigan could soon make a return-the-favor appearance as well. And finally, Ennis says, "There'll be a heartwarming Christmas story. And a story called 'Zombie Night at the Gotham Aquarium'—but I'll let that one speak for itself."

**The Darkness** Scheduled to debut in November from Top Cow, Ennis introduced the character in the *Medieval Spawn/Witchblade* mini-series, and as he explains, "The Darkness is an ancient mystic power that has always been the antithesis and enemy of the Witchblade. The guy who discovers it in our story, though, is the first to try to use it to do good."

**WildC.A.T.s** Slated to inherit the title from Alan Moore sometime in early '97, Ennis has "a vague idea of what I want to do with the book, but until someone phones me up and says, 'Right, go,' those ideas are just going to stay at the back of my head."

**The Unknown Soldier** This four-issue Vertigo mini-series with artist Kilian Plunkett (*Star Wars: Droids*) is a revamp of DC's popular war series which Ennis says "will be a much darker treatment of the character than before."

**Enemy Ace** A two-part prestige story for DC, with artist Christian Alamy (*Lobo's Back*), that shifts German WWI fighter pilot Hans Von Hammer's flight path into World War II.

**Pride and Joy** A four-issue Vertigo drama with art by John Higgins, "about a family man whose criminal past is suddenly slammed in his face."

**Bloody Mary** This four-issue mini-series for DC's new Helix imprint is set against the backdrop of World War III in Europe sometime in the next 20 years. "It's a story about the last survivor of an assassination team hunting for the guy who sold out her entire team and got them killed."

**Preacher: The Story of You-Know-Who** This October one-shot stars the *Preacher* teen affectionately known as Arseface. "They wouldn't let us use 'Arseface' in the title," Ennis explains cheerily. "I just can't wait for all the write-ups on it, to see how many sobriquets they can come up with." ■*TR with additional reporting by Mike Fasolo*

**Particularly with your long run on Hellblazer, it seems like staying committed to a book is something that's important to you.**

It depends on the book. *The Demon*, in retrospect, probably finished roundabout when I had used up my ideas on it. But with *Hellblazer*, I liked the idea of building up this long, three-and-a half-year storyline with all these interlinking characters and themes and plot ideas. I think you get a nice sense of a major story and a real turning point in the character's life when you approach a book that way. *Preacher* takes this to an even greater extreme. This is a six- or seven-year story I'm going to tell.

Cassidy points out the infamous Arseface

**Any characters that you've really got an urge to take a shot at and just go crazy? You made a half-joking plea for Sgt. Rock in the lettercol…**

If the *Unknown Soldier* and *Enemy Ace* books that I'm doing at DC [see sidebar] work out okay, then Sgt. Rock is now looking like a genuine possibility. I love war stories. British war comics were a large part of what I grew up reading, and these characters remind me of those books. I also wouldn't mind a crack at *Aliens* or *Star Wars*. *Predator* would be fun—I'm talking to people at WildStorm about doing a WetWorks/Predator crossover, although that's for quite some time down the line. And I have a vague urge to do Superman. I do have a fairly strong antipathy toward superheroes, but he is the one, true original, and the whole "truth, justice and the American way" thing is something that I find myself responding to, that even my cynicism can't overcome. So maybe one day.

**After all this, we'd be remiss not to ask: What's your religious background?**

I'm an atheist, really. But everyone seems to think I'm some terrible lapsed Catholic who suffered the worst of a Catholic upbringing and had the crap kicked out of him by nuns and monks. In actual fact, I'm not Catholic, and I never had any kind of direct religious upbringing at all, although I was exposed to the inevitable religious influences that growing up in Ireland will give you. And slightly more directly, my school had what was known as the Scripture Union or Christian Union, which young people were very much encouraged to join. They weren't too overt about it, but the kind of insidious propaganda that they employed used to, quite frankly, annoy the piss out of me. But I've always been interested in the history of Christianity and its effect on the world, and more generally speaking, in the idea of faith and of someone giving control over his destiny to what he sees as a higher power. These things have always just fascinated me and they're bound to show up in my work again and again. [*Laughing*] Negatively. W

*Tom Russo can personally vouch for Garth Ennis' psychological well-being—and will gladly do so, for a Glenn Fabry original or two.*

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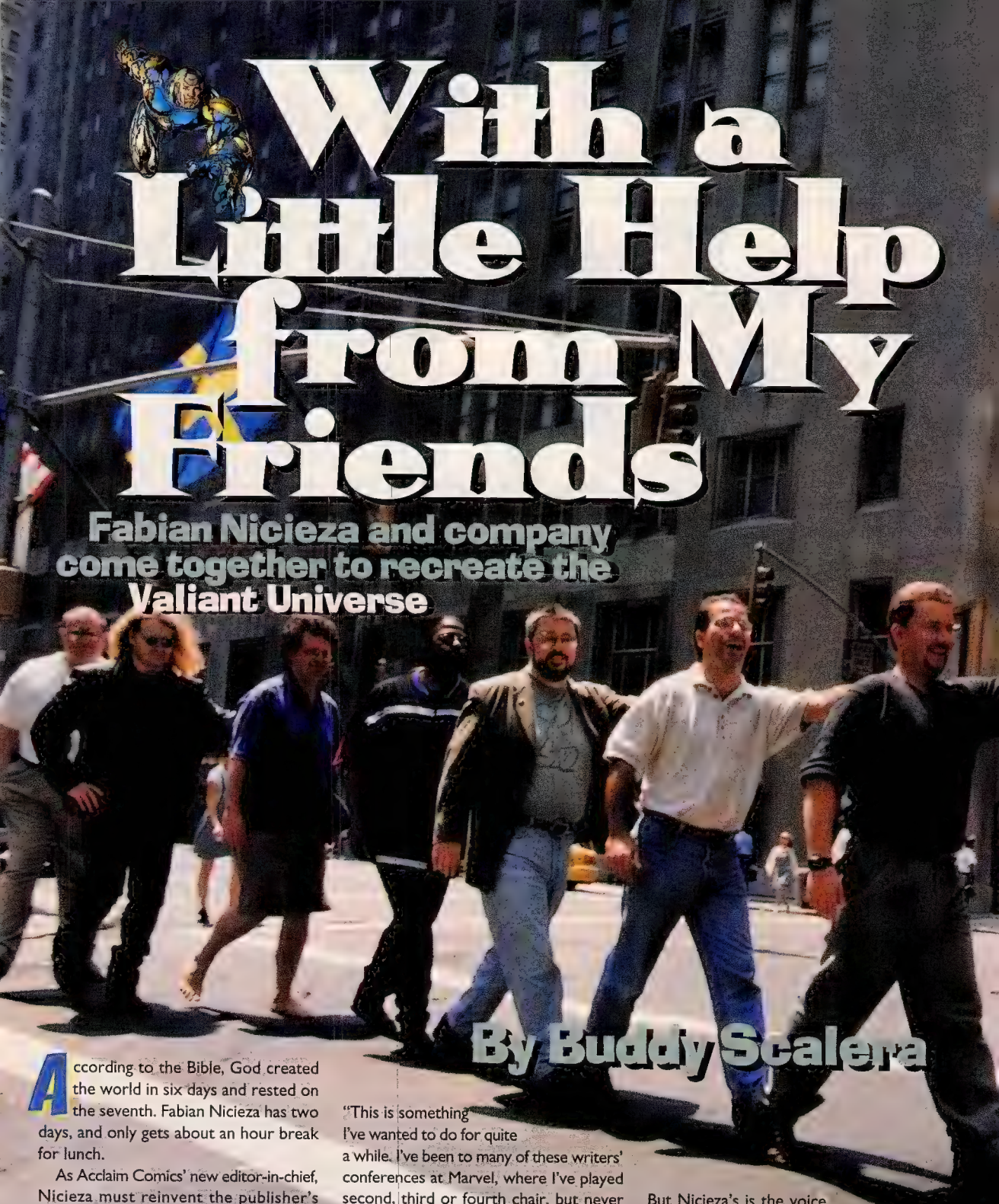
# With a Little Help from My Friends

## Fabian Nicieza and company come together to recreate the Valiant Universe



By Buddy Scalera

According to the Bible, God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. Fabian Nicieza has two days, and only gets about an hour break for lunch.

As Acclaim Comics' new editor-in-chief, Nicieza must reinvent the publisher's Valiant superhero universe for its relaunch this fall. His first order of business was to enlist seven of the best creative minds in the industry. And on two hot June days, *Wizard* peeks in on Nicieza and his crew, gathered at Manhattan's Doral Inn to flesh out the first six issues of the eight series in Valiant's new line.

Despite his daunting task, Nicieza says he's not nervous before entering the room. "This is something I've wanted to do for quite a while. I've been to many of these writers' conferences at Marvel, where I've played second, third or fourth chair, but never first chair," he says. "I'm pretty comfortable with what I have to do."

As group leader, Nicieza admits he doesn't expect a group consensus. All he wants is to lay the groundwork. Two days isn't much time to create a logically interwoven universe. His admission sets the tone early: Hard work is ahead.

Inside, Nicieza's voice immediately takes control. Everyone in the room has a voice. But Nicieza's is the voice of God. When he asks for attention, he's already got it. "We're going to create a sandbox for all of us to comfortably play in," he explains.

His expectations are simple, but some say damn near impossible. Create a universe. Launch a new line of titles. Harness the creative energy of writers with extremely diverse backgrounds. Do it in two days.

Sprawled comfortably around a large conference room table are some of comics' biggest names: Mark Waid, Kurt Busiek, Brian Augustyn, Tom Peyer, Kevin Maguire, Len Kaminski and Christopher Priest. Editors, production coordinators and continuity consultants round out the room, bringing the total to a cool 18 participants.

Two rows of tables form a single giant rectangular conference table. The room is virtually bare save for the windows and air conditioning units. No visual distractions, except for a naked man who wanders around his apartment across the street. Hairy butt jokes are the order of the day.

As expected, the writers concentrate on their respective titles: Augustyn and Waid on *X-O Manowar*, Busiek on *Ninjak*, Nicieza on *Turok* and *Troublemakers*, Peyer on *Magnus*, Priest on *Quantum & Woody*, Kaminski on *Bloodshot* and Maguire on *Trinity Angels*.

Two writers are not present. *Shadowman* writer Garth Ennis is in Northern Ireland, though he is expected to hand both the reins over later in the year to Jamie Delano, also not present. [*Editor's note: After the two-day conference, Art Holcomb signed up to write* Eternal Warriors.]

Team Valiant (from left to right): Augustyn, Kaminski, Peyer, Priest, Busiek, Nicieza, Maguire and Waid

## DAY 1

## Time Waits For No Man

With the reality of a tight two-day deadline looming overhead, they jump right into the action. Nicieza isn't spending time on a glorious mission statement or even a pep rally for the boys. "The first thing we want to talk about is Time," he says.

Nicieza is starting at the bottom—to build a solid foundation, that's where you start. After all, most superheroes don't age. They sort of hang out in what comic editors dismiss as "compressed time." A good writer considers time part of the story.

So, Nicieza opens the conversation pretty much the same way he will for the next two days. "How do we want to handle this?" he asks, standing.

For the next hour or so, the writers unravel theories, express opinions and, of course, crack jokes. Time is important because Nicieza has decided it will be.

"My feeling is that real time is full of pitfalls," says Busiek. "I have always favored 'fake' time."

Augustyn disagrees, "Real forward motion is important. If we are not marking time, we're just standing on a treadmill and nobody grows. Nobody learns. Nobody develops."

Like other core issues they will tackle, there is no universal agreement on Time. Each writer has reasons for preferences to real time, compressed time or, as Busiek coins it, "fake time."

The Valiant Universe exists simultaneously in the past (*Turok*), present (*Shadowman*, *X-O*, *Ninjak*, etc.) and future (*Magnus*). Complicating the issues are the family of Eternal Warriors who live forever and the timeless Lost Land where Turok hunts. The discussion continues.

Nicieza listens a while and, when no consensus is in sight, flexes his editorial muscles. Time, he decides aloud, may be handled differently in each title. It will depend on the desires of the individual writers. Everyone is happy.

Interestingly, the editors rarely speak. Rather, they seem to listen intently to the writers. They jot down notes and interject occasionally, but generally they merely sit back and listen.

"I want the editors to know who their writers are and sit and listen," Nicieza says later. "My main directive is look, listen and learn. Speak up when you have something to say."

## No Religion, Too

By the close of Day 1, the writers cover broadly significant issues. Religious themes—rarely explored in mainstream comics—are discussed.

> "I've been to many of these writers' conferences at Marvel, where I've played second, third or fourth chair, but never first chair. I'm pretty comfortable with what I have to do." — Fabian Nicieza

"I want you to think about what religion your character is," Nicieza directs. "What is our view of religion in the world?"

"In the 40th Century, they worship Scott Baio," Peyer quips. He gets some laughs.

In the end, the concept of using real religions garners favor. "I think it would be a bad mistake for us to create some fake religion, particularly in light of the fact that DC [uses] made-up brand names," says Priest. "If we are going to use religious concepts, make them as close to [established religions] just to take some risk."

Once again, the group does not agree. Religious themes will play a key role at Valiant, but which religion or what kind of role is left undecided.

## Blinding Me with Science

The topic turns to science. Kaminski perks up. Maguire slumps into his seat. As the resident science buff, Kaminski pushes to put the science in sci-fi. His *Bloodshot* would clearly be defensible in scientific arenas.

Continuity consultant James Perham chimes in to offer his views of comic book science. At one point, he passes a note to Nicieza explaining a particularly vexing science dilemma involving the X-O armor. Some science and technology X-O will be using will be far beyond anything possible on Earth. Perham reasons that alien technology is transmitted through the X-O armor.

Nicieza seems grateful to have the explanation.

On the other side of the table, Maguire's *Trinity Angels* would defy physical laws and fall back on a simple premise: "It's magic!" he says cheerfully, sidestepping real science entirely. Perham and Kaminski cringe.

Once again, there is no real decision made on scientific issues. But at least now the writers have had a chance to see how each other plans to approach their books.

Nicieza wraps up Day 1 by addressing his crew. "I think that we set a really good basic parameter for how we want to work with each other," he explains. "Each of the writers' character Bibles for our Valiant Heroes line are the tools which we need to build the house. Today we poured the foundation. Tomorrow we start adding some bricks and get it up."

Before retiring, Nicieza plants the seeds for Day 2. "I'd like to prepare you a little bit for tomorrow. What I would like from you guys are rough overviews, so each of us can see where your books are headed and where we can forge links between our titles. Also, I would like to build continuity ties between our books without them being forced and wedged into each other. And we'll discuss the direction for our future events and development of new characters, new concepts and spin-offs."

The new X-O is the ultimate techno-curious, slacker hacker inside the greatest gift of technology known to man

## DAY 2

### Different Strokes

On Day 2, each title is plotted through the first six issues. Not an easy feat, considering some creative teams only think as far as the next issue. Character development takes shape as the writers explain where the initial storylines are headed.

"This is a good opportunity for those of you who haven't fleshed [your plots] out fully to start to find some angles between those who have fleshed it out a little more—so we can hook up," Nicieza explains.

The writing styles of the creators stand in sharp contrast. Augustyn, Waid and Maguire—who joke about their undeveloped plots—now seem to squirm slightly under the attention. Nicieza pokes at them humorously.

Meanwhile, Kaminski knows exactly where *Bloodshot* is headed through the six issues and beyond. Likewise for Peyer and Priest, who both keep their laptop computers propped open on the conference table. When they are struck with an idea, there is the light sound of fingers tapping keyboards.

Everyone listens intently to find common links between their books. Quick negotiations for logical crossovers are made. A deal is struck between Busiek and Nicieza, as both agree it makes sense that the *Troublemakers* will meet *Ninjak* because both feature young, troubled protagonists.

A conflict is proposed between Waid and Peyer. X-O and Magnus will meet, contrasting the Magnus' anti-technology attitude with X-O's ultimate technology armor.

And Maguire and Priest laugh about a connection between Woody of *Quantum and Woody* and the *Trinity Angels*. They decide that it would be fun if Woody had a dating relationship with one of the Angels.

Nicieza promises that there would be no mandatory universal crossover, if it could be helped. But, cameos are actively encouraged. "Not all the books require a crossover or contact with each other," Nicieza says.

Bloodshot gives conspiracy a new name

### Fiendish Plots

"I want to go over general overviews for your initial several issues of your books," Nicieza says. "Do not think you are being held to this."

Nicieza outlines his rough plots for *Troublemakers* and *Turok*. He rattles off the specifics for the first issues.

"Issue #5 [of *Troublemakers*] is tentatively a Ninjak guest appearance, so Kurt and I have talked about this briefly," Nicieza says, as he and Busiek make eye contact. "It's also going to introduce a couple of super-powered antagonists."

Solar is brought up by Nicieza and poses a discussion from the writers. It's not the character's direction, but his costume.

"[If Solar is omnipotent] do you really think you're going to wear a red jump suit with a visor on it," Nicieza asks, assuming everyone will agree.

"I spent a lot of time with Phil Seleski [Solar's alter ego]," Priest asserts. "He would absolutely wear the red costume. That's the only part of himself he's sure about."

The room divides noticeably for the first time in two days. It's the red-costumed look versus the new costumed Solar. Nicieza reigns in the conversation. He favors an updated look, but may bend to the traditionalists. No one knows for sure how Solar will look in the end.

After title specifics, the group discusses villains. For example, the Spider-Aliens of the "old" Valiant Universe will not have much of a role in the new universe. No one defends them like they did Solar's costume.

Busiek presents a cadre of new villains called the Dark Dozen, filling in the void left by the nameless aliens. He offers one to Waid for X-O. "I've got 12 of them and it's going to take me forever to introduce all of them," Busiek says. "If they pop up in other books that's fine by me."

Waid doesn't say if he will definitely use the villain, but the offer is on the table.

By the close of Day 2, Valiant's first year of publishing is tentatively planned. Nothing is set in stone, but there is a feeling of solid results.

By the end of two days, the team had presented a new feel for the relaunch. Not every editorial issue has been resolved, but significant ground has been covered. "I don't think you can get six or seven writers in a room along with seven to eight editorial people and have them agree on everything," Nicieza says. "If that were to happen, then you are either drawing a miracle or you have people who are not participating or don't care."

By the end of Day 2, Nicieza looks worn, but exhilarated. "I feel a combination of being very pleased with being very tired," he sighs. "Two days of talking and responsibility is a lot of work."

The writers have already broken into little groups and were discussing characters. "Exactly what we needed to do was to share with each other," Nicieza motions to the groups. "I feel best about building enthusiasm about each other's books—about sharing their characters. They all get to play in a sandbox where they're excited to be in." **W**

---

*Buddy Scalera never ceases to amaze his softball teammates on how he can stretch a single out of a triple.*

# Valiant Effort

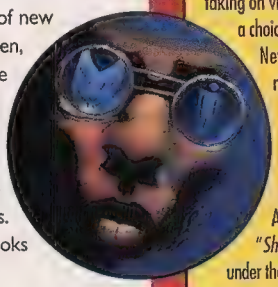
Your favorite Valiant characters are back, but the only things that have survived the fall rebirth are the ™ & ©. Here's what to expect in Acclaim Editor-in-Chief Fabian Nicieza's own words:

## X-O Manowar (October)

Writers: Mark Waid & Brian Augustyn
Artists: Sean Chen & Tom Ryder
"Basically, Donavon Wylie is the ultimate techno-curious, slacker hacker inside the greatest gift of technology known to man. Whether it's a weapon of war or an instrument of peace is what the main character will learn."

## Ninjak (November)

Writer: Kurt Busiek
Artists: Neil Vokes & Michael Avon-Oeming
"*Ninjak* is 'Mortal Kombat' meets *Spider-Man*. It's the exhilarating adventures of a teen dweeb in a buff bod taking on villains who don't die when you beat them. If it's a choice between dealing with four sisters in a cramped New York apartment or bouncing over the city rooftops…what would you do?"



## Shadowman (at left)

(November)
Writers: Garth Ennis/Jamie Delano
Artist: Ashley Wood
"*Shadowman* is the disgusting slimy things growing under the rock in the garden. It's the corner of our universe reserved for the sick and twisted. It's a mature readers book for adults who like to have fun."

## Turok: The Empty Souls

(December)
Quarterly
Writer: Fabian Nicieza
Artist: Rafael Kayanan
"Bill and Ted meets 'The X-Files.' It's the maturation and experience of a self-involved man who has had a tremendous responsibility dropped on his back. The book is equal parts buddy humor, adventure, mystery and mayhem."

## Troublemakers (December)

Writer: Fabian Nicieza
Artists: Kenny Martinez & Anibal Rodriguez
"*Troublemakers* is everything I've always wanted to do and say as a writer and still have something I can drop in the lap of my daughter to read. It's a book about growing and discovery. It spans the gamut from engulfing temporal anomalies to remembering your locker combination at school."

## Magnus

(January)
Writer: Tom Peyer
Artists: Mike McKone & Mike McKenna
"Magnus is a man who chooses to displace himself through time in order to prevent mankind from losing its spark of humanity. Have seen his civilizations deteriorate to a world which is ruled by artificial intelligence, Magnus decides that he can't let it happen all over again. He's in our present day with a simple message, but a very complicated mission: Don't let the human race allow itself to be seduced by the technological advances of society."

## Man of the Atom

(January)
Quarterly Event
Writer: Warren Ellis
Artists: Darick Robertson & George Pérez
"It's a simple little story about defining the universe, defining god and defining ourselves. Warren Ellis has 38 pages in which to tell the story of infinity. Is Solar a part of this? Yes and No. Is he in it? Yes and no. Do we have a plan? Yes."

## Quantum & Woody

(February)
Writer: Christopher Priest
Artist: M.D. Bright
"It's the worst superhero team ever put to together. It's 'dysfunctional Batman and Robin.' It's the superhero medium grabbed by the ankles and shaken until coins come out. It's no superhero parody, but it's close enough to the line to spit."

## Eternal Warriors

(February) Quarterly
Writer: Art Holcomb
Artist: Doug Wheatley
"*Eternal Warriors* is everything a book about immortals should be. It's filled with people who know the big picture, but can't seem to get it to focus right. It's what would happen if you crossed 'Highlander' with the United States Congress. The Republicans and Democrats don't always agree, but in this case a disagreement could mean the end of life as we know it. Or...the beginning of something better. This will appeal to original Valiant readers more than any other."

## Trinity Angels (above) (March)

Writer/Artist: Kevin Maguire
"This is for those who say the Bad Girls craze is over. We give you book about good girls who are not dead, don't have fangs, and are intelligent, witty, engaging, entertaining and fun."

## Bloodshot (March)

Writer: Len Kaminski
Artists: Sal Velluto & Jeff Albrecht
"*Bloodshot* is what Oliver Stone will be taking into his bathroom to bone up on the latest conspiracy theories. It's 'The Terminator' meets 'Frankenstein' meets the grassy knoll. It's an action book for people who like to think and move at the same time." ■ *BS*

FIRST LOOK

# VAMPIRELLA

## 25TH ANIVERSARY SPECIAL

## HARRIS' BAD GIRL CELEBRATES HER 25TH BIRTHDAY WITH A-LIST TALENT

**VAMPIRELLA HAS ALWAYS BEEN MORE THAN** your average violent bimbo. "You don't survive for 25 years in this market if you're just another T&A character," argues Harris Comics Managing Editor David Bogart.

Vampi's longevity and appeal will be celebrated this October in the *Vampirella 25th Anniversary Special*, a 48-page, perfect-bound one-shot that brings together many of Vampirella's fan-favorite artists and some of the most respected writers in comics. As an added bonus, it sports a brand new cover by the fantasy artist who established her image for all time back in 1971: Frank Frazetta.

The four stories in the anthology examine major events in Vampirella's life. Mark Texeira paints a "reinterpretation" of the first Vampi story ever, "Vampirella of Drakulon," written by the legendary Forrest J. Ackerman; James Robinson and Ray Lago team up to recount her first encounter with Dracula; Grant Morrison, Michael Bair and Kevin Nowlan tell of an encounter with one of her deadliest foes, the Blood Red Queen of Hearts; and Warren Ellis, Amanda Conner and Jimmy Palmiotti explore her relationship with her mother, Lilith. Tying the whole package together are title pages for each story done by one of Vampirella's best known artists from the Warren era, Rudy Nebres.

"We wanted to celebrate the anniversary," says Bogart, "but we didn't want to limit ourselves to a single creative team, hence the anthology approach."

Bogart sums up Vampi's appeal the best: "What makes Vampirella work is the combination of her sexuality and the weird horror element that is its flip-side—this great looking woman who is also a vampire. She is one of the richest characters in comics, one who lends herself to new interpretations and to almost any genre," he says. "She is a comics icon, and we wanted to treat her as one." W

*Jack Curtin, who previewed* Elektra *last issue, is also a comics icon and wants to be treated as one, hot dog!*

BY JACK CURTIN

### VITAL STATS

**WHO?**
Vampirella

**WHAT?**
*Vampirella 25th Aniversary Special*

**DEBUT?**
October

**WHAT'S THE DEAL?**
The original scantily clad, blood-lusting comics heroine from the planet Drakulon turns 25! And celebrating with her are an all-star line-up of writers and artists including Frank Frazetta, Mark Texeira, James Robinson, Warren Ellis, Grant Morrison and more.

Mark Texeira interprets Vampi's first tale (above), while Rudy Nebres celebrates her 25th by drawing title pages (opposite page)

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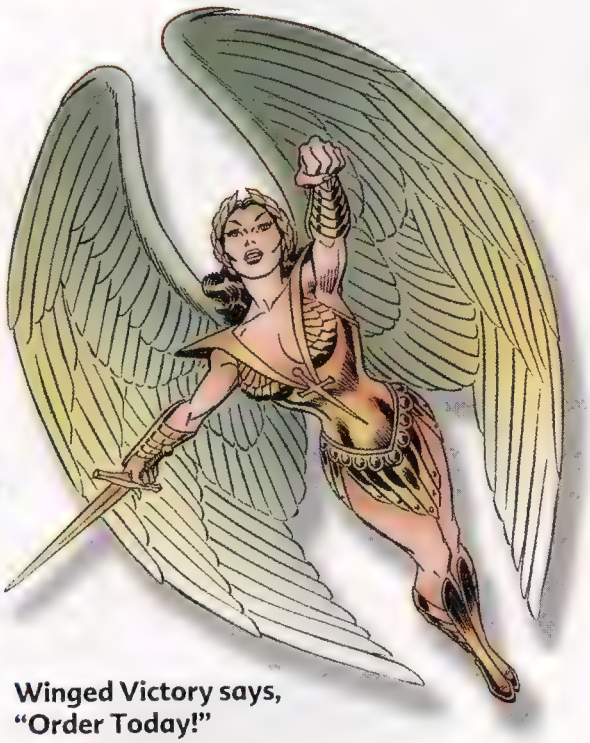

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**SO GET CRACKIN'!**

# Basic Training

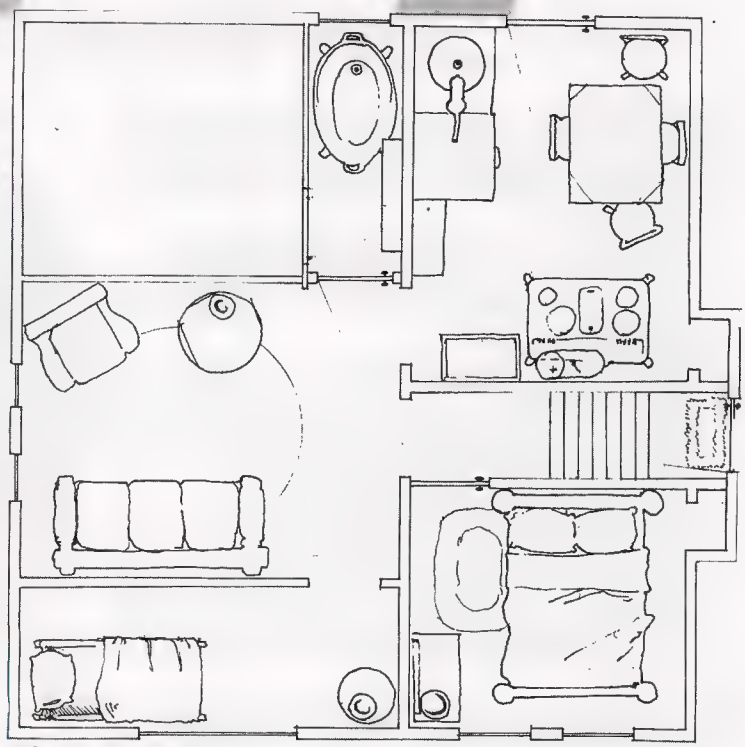
## this month's host: Gerhard

## How to Draw Backgrounds

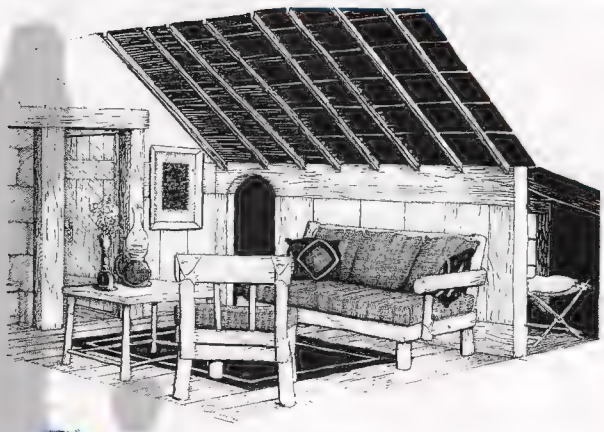
Dave Sim and I have covered a lot of ground in *Cerebus*; from caves to courtyards, battlefields to banks, cathedrals to slums, the moon to Jupiter and beyond. All of these are fun to draw. And while I can show you how I handle the monthly backgrounds for *Cerebus*, everyone's style is a bit different. Hopefully I can steer you in the right direction and give you a good starting ground. But you should definitely take advantage of your local library. Whenever I'm stuck for a period or style, whether it's castles, English taverns or whatever, I just look up what I need and familiarize myself with the different architectural whatnots. The emphasis in *Cerebus*, however, is on the characters' interactions, and people tend to stay put while interacting. Lately, in the story arc "Guys," the action takes place in a bar, for the most part. A bar where the alcohol is free and there's no "last call." Cerebus isn't going anywhere for a while.

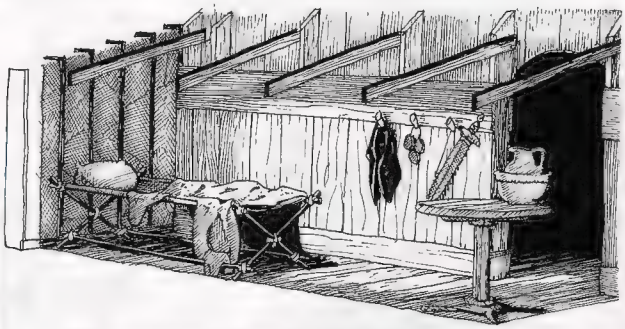
### Planning Ahead

For me, the keys to drawing one location for an extended period are floor plans and keeping the layout fairly simple. In "Jaka's Story" (*Cerebus* #114-#136), I had all manners of plans for Jaka's apartment, Pud's tavern and Oscar's house. I always draw floor plans for places that we're going to be hanging around for a while. For some rooms I even draw up more detailed sketches to add some texture and see how the rooms would look with real furniture in it. Just remember: The important thing is not to clutter things up.



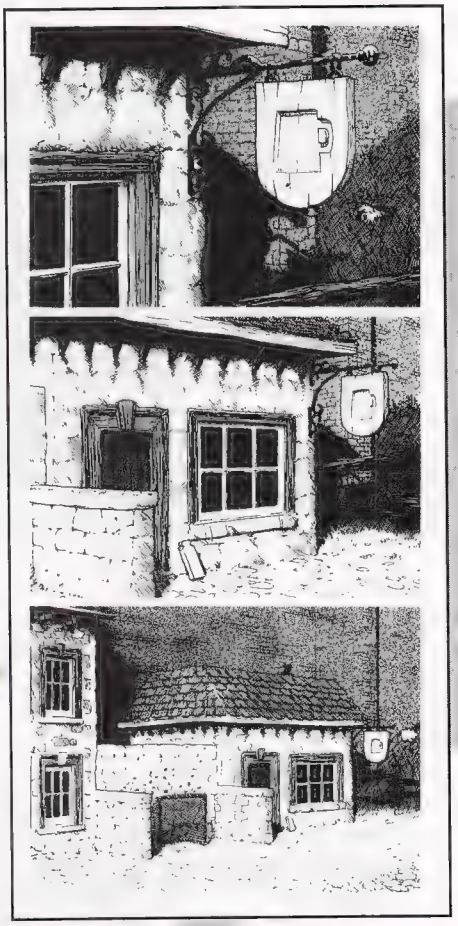
**Jaka's apartment**





**The apartment's living room (left) and Cerebus' "guest room" (above)**

For "Melmoth" (*Cerebus* #139-#150) I actually constructed a small scale model of the street out of sturdy paper (called foam core). It helped me visualize the location and how the characters would move within it.



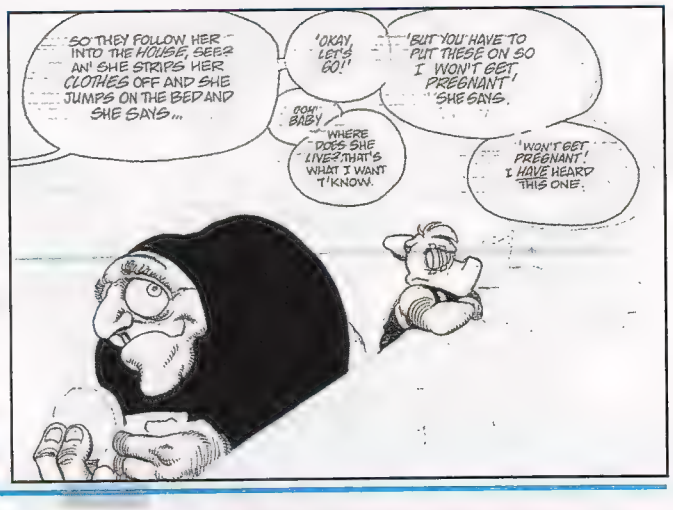
## Establishing the Story

Now, the way Dave and I work on the book is by no means standard in comics. When I get a page, Dave has already laid it out, and has penciled and inked all the characters, word balloons and sound effects. My job then is to put these characters in context. Lighting plays a huge part in this. What direction has Dave used for a light source? How intense is that source? How will the light affect the mood and intention of the panel? And how long until lunchtime?

In every other issue or so, there is usually something of an establishing shot. This gives a context for the smaller panels and the therefore necessarily smaller amount of visual information expressed in that panel. This establishing shot sets up the feel of when and where we are. The backgrounds in the subsequent panels need only retain that feel, suggesting the same level of lighting and texture.

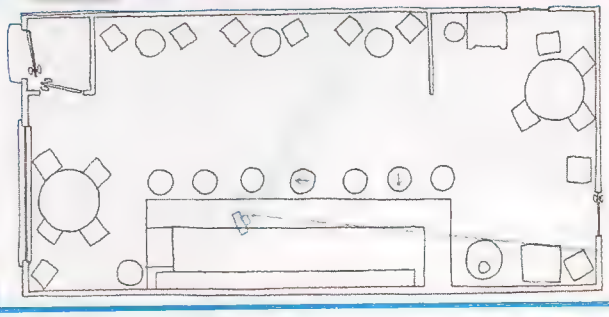
## Making a Point

This is a panel as Dave has left it. The jug of soda, rice cakes and edge of the bar are in pencil. For me, the first thing is to determine where the characters are and where the viewer is. So you need to find the vanishing point—the point of convergence way down the line. (It helps to think of it like looking down a set of railroad tracks. Where it looks like they converge all the way off in the distance is the vanishing point.) To position it, I need to know where "eye level," or the horizon line, is. In this case, it's established by the edge of the bar and the relative sizes of the characters. Since Cerebus is roughly three feet tall, his eye level is usually pretty low. (Yeah, he tends to see under a lot of tables.) I figure Martin, the hunchbacked fellow, is about the same height, sitting there, as Cerebus is. I draw a line with a non-reproducible blue pencil from the top of the hunchback extending past Cerebus' head, and another along the existing edge of the bar. I find the lines converge near enough to Cerebus' eye level. This places the vanishing point just above his pitcher of soda (which appears in later versions of the panel). Now I can figure out just where I am in relation to the characters.



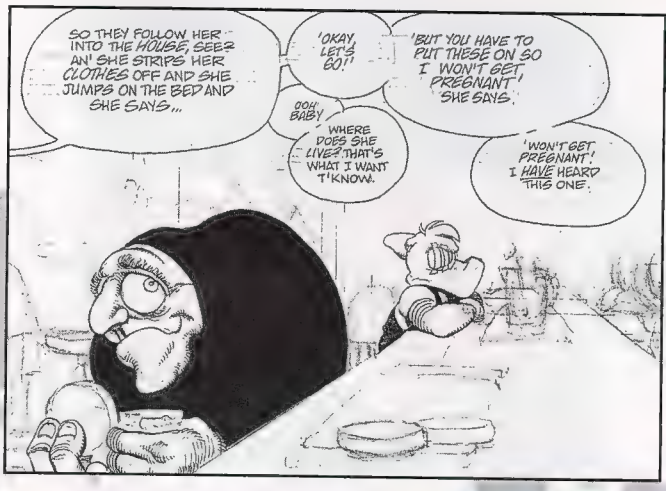

## Say Cheese

On a floor plan, I've indicated that Cerebus is on the second-to-last bar stool, facing the bar, and Martin is two stools over, sitting parallel to it. The panel borders can help determine how wide the view is, and by using the vanishing point, you can figure out exactly where the "camera" (or more specifically, you) is positioned and the field of view plotted. You now know just where you're sitting in the room and can determine what you'll see behind our two friends.



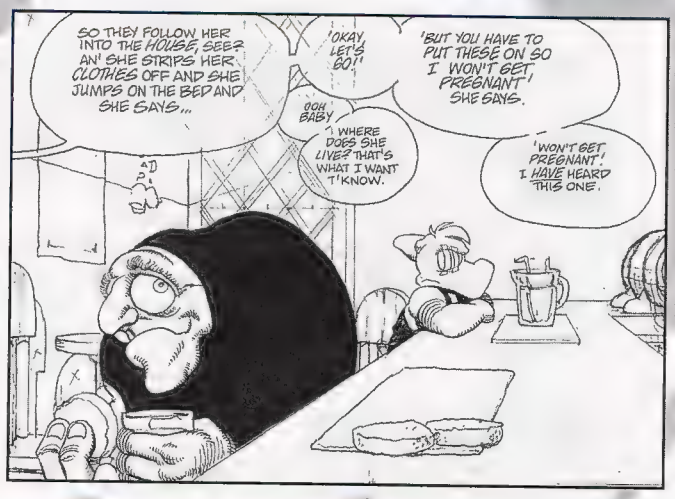
## Back to Black

At this stage I determine where to spot the blacks. Large areas of solid black play an important role in drawing *Cerebus*. They add weight and emphasis to the page, as well as contrast. And contrast is key. The idea is to accentuate the characters and word balloons, while trying to add a richness of mood and setting. Cerebus will have a 30-percent gray tone applied to him, so he needs either solid black or solid white around him to contrast effectively. The hunchbacked fellow is wearing black, so he needs something behind him to avoid disappearing. I've placed the room divider screen in the background—as indicated on the floor plan—so as to span the width of Martin, allowing me to black in the back part of the room behind Cerebus, with just the back of a chair visible to bring out his black vest. I rough all of this in with a non-reproducible blue pencil. I usually complete these steps for all of the panels on the page and the facing page before proceeding with lunch.



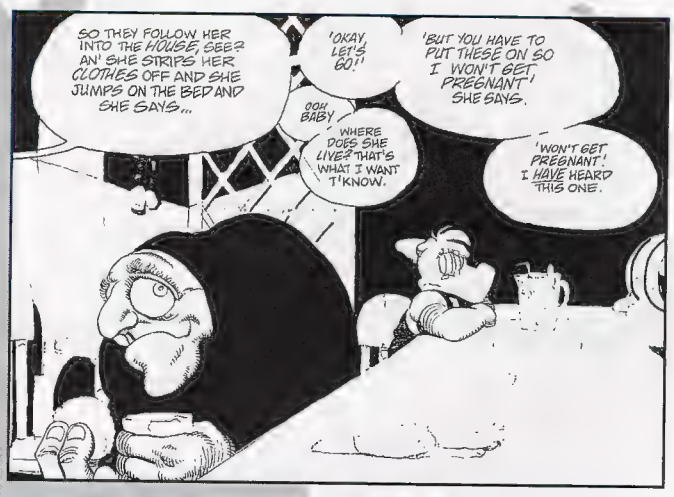

## Cleaning Up

I can now move on to tightening up the rough "blue squiggly line" stage. I do the tighter rendering with a 3H graphite pencil, a metal ruler (with a cork back for inking), sometimes an assortment of circle and ellipse templates, sometimes (yeah, right) an eraser, and *always* with previous issues at hand for reference. At this point, I figure out incidental shadows and try to put in a few details without cluttering things up. If it detracts from the main images, ditch it. Occasionally I run into sound effects and have to decide (or consult Dave on) whether to fade the backgrounds around them, outline the sound effects or have them reversed to white by the printer so that they're not lost in a black background.



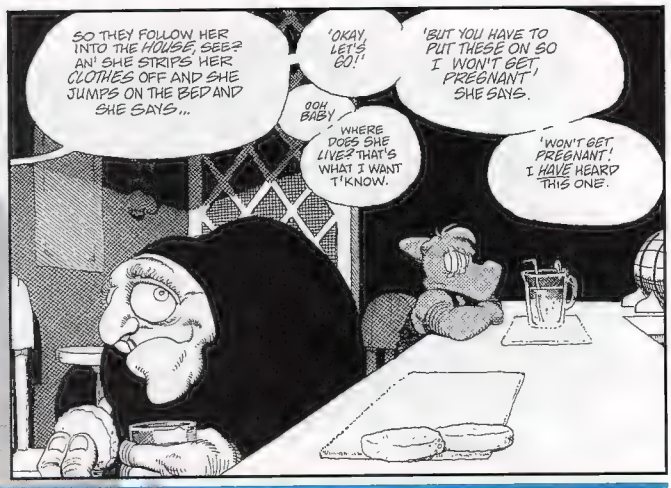

## Fade to Black

I like to have the blacks filled in next. It gives substance to the backgrounds, giving me a better feel for the compositions (which I can still fix at this point if I'm unhappy with them), and helping me determine how much or little cross-hatching or tone I'll need to achieve the various shades I have in mind. This is usually the only time I use a technical pen, to outline the black areas. I then fill them in with brushes, going for a good even coating of jet black ink. The darker and more even the black, the less the person shooting the negatives has to guess at an exposure.



## The Finishing Touches

With a Hunt 102 crow quill pen, I add outlines, details and cross-hatching. I try to stay consistent with the weight and style of line Dave has used on the characters so that they blend, to a certain extent, to form a unified visual experience. The inclination in *Cerebus* has been toward characters that are more cartoony in nature, interacting with a more realistic background. This technique is known (thanks to Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*) as masking. In "Guys," however, the backgrounds have become more pliable and even delve into the realm of parody when Rick Veitch or Eddie Campbell start hanging around. Finally, after erasing the pencil lines, cutting and trimming the Letratone (or Zip-a-Tone, as you call it in the States) on Cerebus, and cleaning up the panel borders, this page is done. It's time to move on to the next page and do it all over again.



While a page like this may not be the most fun to draw or the most challenging artistically, I feel it's important to maintain a certain level of continuity with the background, achieving a sense of time and place. This allows the characters to move and interact within a consistent framework, much as a bass player in a band (something I also try to do) joins the drummer in providing an environment for the melodies, harmonies, rhythms and solos to flourish. Backgrounds may not be as noticeable as the main characters on a page, but you'd certainly notice if they were missing. So start familiarizing yourself with the backgrounds around you, and keep practicing.

*Gerhard's backgrounds can be seen monthly in his and Dave Sim's* Cerebus. *He likes beer.*

# TRAILER PARK

*Wizard*'s column about Hollywood and TV and stuff like that

## 'BATMAN and ROBIN': Chill Factor High

**By Rob Allstetter**

THE NEW ICON FOR "BATMAN AND ROBIN" FEATURES ROBIN'S NEW SYMBOL

"It's going to be a cold day in Hell for **Batman and Robin**."

That's how director **Joel Schumacher** summed up a video preview of "Batman and Robin," shown by DC Comics at the San Diego Comic Con in July. The five-minute clip featured costume, set and prop designs and left the impression the film will be on an even bigger scale than its predecessors.

"Batman and Robin," the fourth film in the Warner Bros. series, is set to begin production next month, and stars **George Clooney** as Batman, **Arnold Schwarzenegger** as Mr. Freeze, **Chris O'Donnell** as Robin, **Uma Thurman** as Poison Ivy and **Alicia Silverstone** as Batgirl.

The designs for Clooney's Batsuit look similar to the costume **Val Kilmer** wore at the end of "Batman Forever." Robin's new costume design looks more like Nightwing's costume, but with a red-and-black color scheme. The logo on Robin's chest is the same as the one that is superimposed over Batman's on the film's logo.

There will also be a new Batmobile—with a convertible option—while Robin will drive his own car, the Redbird. Both will be stored in a much larger Batcave.

With Mr. Freeze as a villain, expect lots of devices relating to cold, ice and snow. Schumacher promised a rooftop car-chase scene and "Gotham [City] as you have never seen it before."

Said Schumacher of Thurman's Poison Ivy: "Her strength is in her seductive powers. You kiss her and you die."

Batgirl will not be Barbara Gordon, but rather a ward of Alfred. Once again, Alfred will be played by **Michael Gough**. The heroine's costume design is a cross between Batman and Catwoman—all black with large bat ears.

Said Schumacher of Silverstone: "Besides her obvious youth and beauty, she's a phenomenal actress who has a wonderful sense of humor."

As long rumored, Bane—the villain who broke Batman's back in the comics—will be in the film, although the part was not cast at press time. "He's a remarkable physical specimen, made in a laboratory," Schumacher said. "He's Poison Ivy's sidekick. She uses him like a pit bull."

And, as if the cast of "Batman and Robin" wasn't sexually charged enough, it will feature two *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit models. **Elle Macpherson** has signed on to play Bruce Wayne's girlfriend, and **Vendela** will play the wife of Mr. Freeze (*Mrs. Freeze*, of course).

"Batman and Robin" is scheduled to hit theaters next June.

## GETTING THE MOST WITH THE CROW

**"The Crow: City of Angels,"** the sequel to the 1994 hit "The Crow," based on **James O'Barr's** comic book, will officially open in theaters on Aug. 30—pushed back from the original premiere date of Aug. 2.

Jeff Most, who produced the film with Edward Pressman, said "City of Angels" is expected to open in 2,500 theaters nationally, the largest release in the history of Miramax, the film's distributor.

"We were concerned that theaters would hold on to the bigger summer movies," said Most, who also produced the first "Crow" film, of the delay. "Plus, with the movie tied to the Day of the Dead [festival], it made more sense to open the movie at the end of the summer. It seemed like the right time."

Most said "City of Angels" turned out "fantastically well." The film, directed by Tim Pope and written by David Goyer, stars **Vincent Perez** as Ashe (the new Crow), Mia Kirschner as Sarah, Richard

Brooks as Judah Earl and Iggy Pop as Curve.

The first video from the film's soundtrack—which was produced by Most and is already available—is Hole's remake of Fleetwood Mac's "Gold Dust Woman," which immediately went into heavy rotation on MTV. The second video will be from the band Filter.

Most is now working on a film version of London Night Studios' ***Razor*** with producer/director Renny Harlin and his wife, actress Geena Davis. It will be written by Alan McElroy, who wrote the **"Spawn"** movie and has been linked to a "Scud, the Disposable Assassin" film.

Most also told *Wizard* he has purchased the film rights to O'Barr's new comic book series, ***Gothik***.

## SHOWTIME FOR VAMPIRELLA

**"Vampirella,"** the made-for-cable movie based on Harris Comics' flagship character, is tentatively scheduled to air on the Showtime cable network Sept. 15 as part of the "Roger Corman Presents" series.

**Talisa Soto** ("License to Kill") stars in the title role, and **Roger Daltrey**, lead singer of The Who, plays the villain Vlad. Angus Scrimm, the Tall Man in the "Phantasm" movies, plays Vampirella's father.

The movie was directed by Jim Wynorski and produced by Angela Baynes. Forrest J. Ackerman, the creator of Vampirella, is listed as an associate producer.

"Vampirella" scripter Gary Gerani, a co-writer of "Pumpkinhead" who is best known in the comics industry for his trading card work, was on the set for most of the 24 days of filming in Las Vegas last May.

"It seems to hold together," Gerani said. "The production values are television [level], and with fantasy films, you tend to want more. But hopefully, with the characters so good and the story so good, people are going to be entertained."

The movie's plot involves Vampirella leaving Drakulon to pursue the killer Vlad, who drank the blood of her father. After crash-landing on Mars, she is awakened from suspended animation and winds up on Earth in the year 2005.

Vlad has become the rock star, Jami Blood, and now leads a group of vampires bent on Earth's domination. Vampirella must form an uneasy alliance with Adam Van Helsing and Operation Purge—a worldwide vampire task force—to take on Vlad and his followers, all the while battling her own bloodlust.

"Talisa brings a lot of dignity to the part," he said. "There are dozens of beautiful girls out there, but here's a case of a beautiful woman with intelligence and sensitivity."

Gerani said the film combines many of the elements he saw in the comic books: science fiction, action/adventure and the supernatural. "It wouldn't be fair to call this a horror movie," he noted.

If successful, "Vampirella" could lead to a regular series or more telefilms.

Meanwhile, look for a second **"Black Scorpion"** film on Showtime's "Roger Corman Presents" series, in which Joan Severance will reprise her role as a masked crimefighter.

TALISA SOTO (RIGHT) IS VAMPIRELLA IN SEPTEMBER

Talisa Soto photo courtesy of Everett Collection

## SUPERMAN ANIMATION REPORT

The long-awaited **"Superman"** animated series starts as a 90-minute prime-time movie on Sept. 7, moving into its 10 a.m. (ET) time period on Kids' WB the next morning. There will be 13 episodes for the first season, and producer Paul Dini revealed at the San Diego Comic Con that the series will air daily with 52 more episodes beginning in the second season.

Among the new voices announced at the "Superman" panel were **Malcolm McDowell** as Metallo, **Bruce Weitz** as the mobster Bruno, **Michael Ironside** as Darkseid, Shelley Fabares and Mike Farrell and Ma and Pa Kent, Joely Fisher as Lana Lang, Charlie Schlatter as the Flash and Gilbert Gottfried as Mr. Mxyzptlk.

SPOON! I'M BACK!

Dini added there will be new episodes of the "Batman" animated series made once it moves from Fox to Kids' WB. "We're looking at ways to try to reinvent the show a bit," he said.

## THE TICK RETURNS—SPOON!

Ben Edlund, creator of **The Tick,** said at the San Diego Comic Con that the hapless hero's animated series will return to Fox in September for a third season of 10 new episodes.

"I've pulled away a little bit from the art side," Edlund said. "We've got a lot of people working for us, and the work stands on its own feet. I've been focusing on the story editing and writing."

Among the silliness for the third season will be The Tick growing a moustache. "A real Errol Flynn number," Edlund laughed.

"The Tick" will also air Sunday nights on Comedy Central starting in September. Edlund said there's been talk of the series eventually airing weeknights at midnight on Comedy Central, or the cable network might air

a marathon of episodes. Edlund added there has been talk of an animated "Tick" feature film.

## WEIN'S WORLD X-CELLENT

**Len Wein**, a veteran comics/animation writer who created Wolverine two decades ago, has written an episode that teams Logan and Captain America for the upcoming season of Fox's **"X-Men"** animated series.

The episode is called "Old Soldiers," and is told in flashback as Wolverine visits the grave of someone in Paris. The story is set in 1943 as Logan is sent on a mission to rescue a French scientist being held captive by the Red Skull. His contact on the mission turns out to be Captain America. Sgt. Fury and the Howling Commandos also appear.

"Probably of all the scripts I've done, this one is my favorite," Wein said. "I've been told they loved it at Fox and changed it very little."

Wein has also written an upcoming episode of Fox's **"Spider-Man"** that brings back Venom, an episode of UPN's "The Incredible Hulk" that features Sasquatch and two episodes each of USA's "Street Fighter" and ABC's new "Gargoyles" series.

WILL THE MASK MEET ACE VENTURA IN '97?

## UNMASKING A NEW SEASON

Marty Isenberg and his partner, Robert Skir, are among the syndicated story editors for the upcoming season of **"The Mask"** animated series, which will have eight new episodes on CBS and 30 new episodes in syndication.

"The syndicated shows are keeping in spirit of the CBS series, but we have a license to go a little wilder," Isenberg said. "We get pretty hairy. We'll have more action and be gag-oriented."

The new season features a couple time-travel episodes, including one with a new villain, Kronos.

Isenberg added that there is talk of CBS doing a crossover with "The Mask" and another **Jim Carrey**-inspired cartoon, "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective."

# Celebrity Profile

## VINCENT PEREZ

Vincent Perez got his feet wet right away during the making of "The Crow: City of Angels." During the very first day of shooting, he was tied up and dropped in and out of water for eight hours of filming.

The European actor, best known for films like "Indochine" and "Queen Margot," is making his American movie debut with "City of Angels." He also faces the challenge of following the riveting performance of the late Brandon Lee—even if it is a different character assuming the mantle of The Crow.

Perez has been making convention appearances this summer promoting "City of Angels," and *Wizard* took notes on his comments at Atlanta's Dragon*Con and the San Diego Comic Con.

Photo by Robert Zuckerman

**His role:** "I liked the idea of playing The Crow. I did have doubts; I didn't like the idea of doing a sequel. But it's not merely a sequel repeating the first movie. It's based on the comic book instead of the first 'Crow' [film]."

**Meeting Crow creator James O'Barr:** "He was very close to Brandon, and I was really respecting his friendship with Brandon. He was quite suspicious at the beginning, but we became good friends....We respect James O'Barr's work, and I think he liked the movie, too. It was very important [for us] to stay with the truth of the character."

**Working with writer David Goyer and director Tim Pope:** "I'd ask for rehearsing to go through scenes. [Goyer] was there on the set, and he'd be helping changing dialogue....With my first meeting with the director, I really felt that this guy had a vision. Every day, I went into this madness—it was an impossible situation—and I had to believe in it."

**On the major water scene:** "I was under water for 45 minutes, and then 10 minutes out of it, over and over. In the water, I felt this huge solitude. I was supposed to panic—that was easy."

**Working with rock star Iggy Pop, who plays the villain Curve:** "On the first day of shooting we had a scene on this pier where he was supposed to kill me. Before that, though, he was supposed to kiss me on the mouth. Well, he wasn't that used to acting, so he put his tongue in my mouth. [*Laughs*] He was very open, very easy to work with."

**Making his first American movie:** "I was so happy to make a movie in the American way. Everything was so organized."

**The raven, Magic, who also appeared in the first film:** "He was a great bird. He'd be on the other side of the room, and I could call him to my shoulder."

**Comic books:** "I like comics. My dream was to be a painter. I then went into photography, then to theater and then to movies."

**The face makeup:** "I wanted to create my own makeup. We did two days of working on it—and we found a simple one that had makeup like tears out of my eyes. What I like is you see my face and then the makeup. I felt a lot of freedom with the mask—it gives you the feeling that there's no limits."

## WARNER DELIVERS A BLACK CROSS

Chris Warner is getting second helpings in Hollywood. First, Warner's Barb Wire character was brought to life in a movie starring **Pamela Lee** in May. Now, a movie based on his **Black Cross** character is on schedule to be made by Disney's Touchstone Pictures.

Warner has written the screenplay for "Black Cross" with Steve Perry. The film is scheduled to star former National

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Football League great **Howie Long** and will begin production next March—probably in the Pacific Northwest. Russell Mulcahy ("Highlander") has been approached to direct.

"It's a 21st Century Western," said Warner of "Black Cross," which was the subject of the lead story and cover of Dark Horse's first comic, *Dark Horse Presents* #1, more than a decade ago.

"Post-apocalyptic movies have been done to death and no one's done it as well as 'Road Warrior,' but ['Black Cross'] has got some of that. It's more the flavor of a Western, though. I find that Westerns are almost the best vehicles for saying what's good and bad about America."

Warner was delighted with the casting of Long, a former Los Angeles Raiders defensive lineman who is now a football analyst for Fox *and* recently appeared in the John Travolta movie "Broken Arrow."

"It would be hard to find a genuinely tougher guy than Howie Long," Warner said. "He's battled 300-pound offensive linemen—he's a tough son of a gun. He was one of my favorite football players and, as a commentator, he's funny. He's got an edge."

Despite the lackluster performance of "Barb Wire," Warner said he was happy with Pamela Lee in the role and the film in general. He felt the film would do well in home video.

"[Lee] came across as good as any incarnation of a comic character as possible," Warner said. "In the action sequences, she was very credible, better than most male stars I've seen."

## SLIDERS UPDATE

**"Sliders"** is sliding its production from Vancouver to Los Angeles for its third season of 25 episodes on Fox. The show is back in its time period of Friday at 8 p.m. (ET), thanks in part to an intensely loyal following.

"We're going to do more science fiction- and adventure-based shows," said "Sliders" creator/producer Robert K. Weiss of the third season.

"It's going to have a lot of everything," added Tracy Torme, the series' other creator/producer. "We'll have action to comedy and one or two shows that will be darker. There will also be social commentary and social allegory. We have a very unique opportunity with [the series] being set in other worlds."

## SHORT TAKES

Neal McDonough, who is doing the voice of Bruce Banner on **"The Incredible Hulk"** animated series, is playing the part of Lieutenant Hawk in **"Star Trek: First Contact,"** which will be in theaters in November....This fall's special Star Trek 30th Anniversary episode of TV's **"Deep Space Nine"** will be a "Forrest Gump"-like episode titled "Trials and Tribble-ations," bringing Sisko and crew to the classic "Star Trek" 's "Trouble with Tribbles" tale....Sources told *Wizard* at least some of the cast members from the **"Generation X"** telefilm will be approached to return for the weekly syndicated series....In addition to the six episodes in production for the **"Spawn"** animated series on HBO, the cable network has ordered six new scripts. Meanwhile, actress **Teresa Randall** is almost a sure bet for the live-action film's Wanda Blake....**"Mortal Kombat Annihilation"** will be New Line Cinema's sequel to the 1995 "Mortal Kombat" movie based on the popular video games. According to *Daily Variety*, cinematographer John R. Leonetti, who was the director of photography on "Mortal Kombat," will make his directing debut on "Annihilation." There has been no casting yet for the $25 million film....**"Space Jam,"** the live-action/animated movie featuring Warner Bros.' Looney Tunes characters and the Chicago Bulls' **Michael Jordan**, will be in theaters on Nov. 15....Another NBA star, **Shaquille O'Neal**, was scheduled to be part of the "Steel" movie production, which began in Los Angeles on Aug. 7. Judd Nelson ("The Breakfast Club") will co-star as a scheming scientist....ABC has purchased the network rights to **"The Phantom,"** this summer's movie starring Billy Zane and Kristy Swanson....Comics writer Steven Grant told *Wizard* that Fox has passed on the **"Enemy"** telefilm—based on his Dark Horse mini-series—and it is now being shopped around....The Sci-Fi Channel has picked up **"Mystery Science Theater 3000"** from Comedy Central and has ordered 13 new episodes to begin airing in February....Dark Horse writer Mark Verheiden has written an episode of HBO's new series, **"Perversions of Science,"** which, like "Tales from the Crypt," is based on the old EC Comics. "The working title of my episode is 'Given the Heir,' " Verheiden said. "It's a very kinky time-travel story. It's a real sick one."...**Jonathan Harris**, who played Dr. Smith on "Lost in Space," is doing the voice of Professor Jones on an upcoming episode of "Freakazoid!"...Comics had a presence at the **Olympics** this year: U.S. gymnast Blaine Wilson had a Tick tattoo on his shin, U.S. swimmer Josh Davis' family and friends all wore Superman shirts, and prime-time anchor **Bob Costas** likened himself to Captain America and gymnastics commentator John Tesh to Superman....Kids' WB will have eight new episodes of **"Animaniacs"** this season....**Dean Cain**, star of "Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman," has signed on to appear with **Drew Barrymore** in the feature film thriller "Independence." Cain's "L&C" co-star, **Teri Hatcher**, has joined the cast of Miramax's "Dogwater," a new comedy directed by fellow star David Schwimmer, cast member of "Friends." **W**

*Look for Rob Allstetter's rendition of Wham!'s "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go" on the new "Crow" soundtrack.*

ADVENTURE AND SCI-FI SPARKS THE THIRD SEASON OF "SLIDERS"

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# scene

A guide to Japanese comics and animation

by Carl Gustav Horn

## Gainax's new anime gospel

"Manga Scene" regulars will remember the report in *Wizard* #55 on anime-multimedia studio Gainax and its 26-episode anime TV show "Neon Genesis Evangelion," the subject of an intense bidding war among American licensing companies. The war (and the wait for U.S. fans) is over, with Houston's A.D. Vision winning the right to release "Evangelion" this August and November, and then bimonthly thereafter (two episodes per VHS tape, $29.95 subtitled, $24.95 dubbed, with a four-episode each bilingual, CC, CLV laserdisc edition starting in January for $59.95). ADV has rocketed to industry prominence during the last year with its willingness to pay an unprecedented sum for the rights to "Evangelion"—understood to be between $300,000 and a cool million.

It is hard to argue it's not worth it. "Neon Genesis Evangelion" won this year's Grand Prix fan poll conducted among readers of Japan's oldest anime magazine, *Animage*, with competition from famous-name TV sequels such as "Macross Seven" and "Gundam Wing"—and despite being on TV Tokyo, a network that doesn't even reach all of Japan. One of "Evangelion" 's female protagonists, Ayanami Rei, still ranks at number one in the *Animage* favorite-character poll. The CD single of the show's opening and ending themes sold a respectable 500,000 copies. And Vol. 3 of the "Evangelion" soundtrack went to the top of the Japanese music charts—the first anime album to do so in seventeen years.

Scott Frazier, who worked on Production I.G.'s "Ghost in the Shell" (profiled in *Wizard* #51), and is the most prominent American in the anime industry, suggests that person-for-person, the anime division at Gainax (about a dozen people) may be the most creative design team in the industry. Toshio Okada, Gainax's founder and former president, argues that unlike other anime studios, Gainax doesn't have a top-down mentality about how something must look—*everyone*'s ideas go into a Gainax production. The results can be seen in "Evangelion."

One of the heroic teen mecha pilots from Gainax's "Neon Genesis Evangelion"

Those readers new to anime, who are aware of the dearth of creativity and oversaturation of trends in the U.S. comics industry, may be surprised to learn that a similar crisis is perceived within the anime industry in Japan, particularly in its direct-to-video market, the OAV. The OAV was invented in the early '80s, in part by Japanese record companies (such as Star Child/King, the primary backer of "Evangelion") as an alternative to expensive anime TV shows or movies. The theory was that this format would also allow experimentation, and indeed the mid-'80s saw such original bursts as "Megazone Two Three," which challenged "We Are the World" for Japan's top-selling video of the year. By the late '80s, the OAV began to fall into a feedback loop with producers concentrating on sequels and remakes rather than promoting new ideas. The once-exuberant OAV market shrank to that of the hardcore fans. Many companies are now talking about getting out of the OAV business all together.

"Neon Genesis Evangelion" encapsulates the ancient Greek words for "new" (Neon) and "gospel" (Evangelion). Writer/director Hideaki Anno meant to suggest a new approach (and beginning, hence "genesis") for anime with his title. As well, he hoped to reach a mass audience through TV, despite the grueling challenge of producing 26 episodes on a relatively small budget. The new approach that "Evangelion" contains, though, is not only in the freshness of its graphics, but in the very structure of the show.

At first glance, the basic premise of "Evangelion" is nothing unusual for anime: cute girls and boys piloting mecha against monsters in the year 2015. Despite the fantastic architecture, weaponry, and Jack Kirby-esque superscience that surrounds its protagonists, "Evangelion" is strongly character-driven (Anno, desiring to write real women rather than the caricatures which populate much of anime, sought the perspective of studying female romance fiction) and the show develops three different age tiers who figure in the show: the 14-year-old mecha pilots, their "Gen-X" commanders and guardians, and the distant, ruthless generation of the pilots' parents—scientists who know too much and answer far too little.

Everyone in "Evangelion" is "seriously messed up," Anno's translator at 1996's Anime Expo offered. The characters work for NERV, a secret UN organization struggling against

the insidious advance of mysterious, ultra-powerful entities called the Angels. But NERV struggles against itself. Its members are caught in a web of cover-stories within cover-stories involving NERV's even more shadowed superiors, a project promoting human evolution, and the truth lying behind 3000 years of Biblical prophecy and Kabbalistic mysticism. It's an atmosphere somewhat reminiscent of "The X-Files," but its threads are grounded in the real-life theme of rivalry between parents and children—as well as the dark territory of murder, suicide, insanity, hatred and the desperate human desire to be loved. The show caused considerable controversy for its graphic violence and an actual sex scene—both rare in TV anime—as well as its blunt, sarcastic final episode which raised a storm of protest despite being viewed by ten million Japanese. Two episodes' worth of an "alternative perspective" ending are being re-shot for the video and LD release, and will be available with the TV ending from A.D. Vision.

One of "Evangelion" 's realistic heroines

Having gambled and won on "Evangelion," Anno can afford to dismiss his critics. But this ultimate "fanboy," who breaks into "Ultraman" poses when in front of the camera, is as hard on himself as he is on his industry and its fans. "Evangelion" was a struggle against four years of his own cowardice—a hiatus from work where "all I was doing was simply not dying," said Anno to his American audience. "If I talk about the 'limitations of the industry, after all, what does that mean? Aren't I really talking about the limitations inside myself? It is the creators who have to change their frame of mind." Most people who make anime, Anno said, have the kind of "autism" he himself has suffered from. "They have to try and reach out with their work, and communicate to others. What's the greatest thing anime has ever achieved? The fact that we're holding a dialogue right here and now." When a fan of the master asked for advice to those who'd like to break into anime, he shot back, "Be interested in other things *besides* animation." W

*Carl Gustav Horn breaks into "Ultraman" poses in the Taco Bell Drive-Thru at 2 a.m. And then the cops come...*

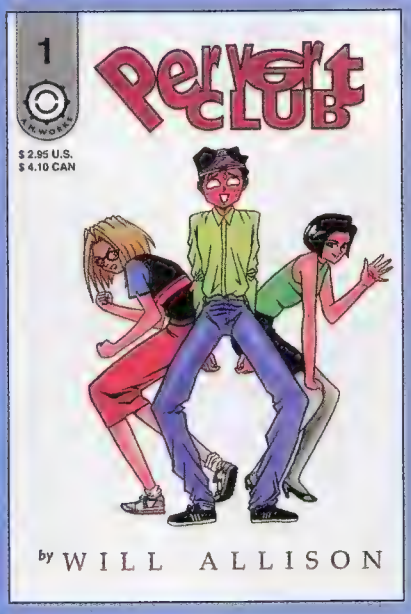
# picks of the month

## manga

### Pervert Club

(A.M. Works, $2.95, bimonthly, 32 pgs., b&w, mature readers.)

There's more to doing comics in the "manga style" than having characters with big eyes and deformed proportions. Will Allison, writer and artist of *Pervert Club,* was curious about what would happen if you took the standard manga story featuring a "nebbishy" high-school guy with cute girls hanging off him (a story element of *Kimagure Orange Road, Video Girl Ai, Oh My Goddess!* and *Tenchi Muyo!*) and set it in a *real* American high school—something more like "Heathers." They'd have to have a pretty strange reason to hang off him *then*, right? How about cross-dressing? Will the protagonist Malcolm's mysterious new popularity with the girls balance out his imminent ass-kicking by the guys? Despite its salacious title, *Pervert Club* is *not* an adults-only book, but a wry little number on teenage cliques from the same studio that produced Dean Hsieh's acclaimed *Athena.*




## anime

### GoShogun: The Time Étranger

(U.S. Manga Corps, subtitled, 90 mins. each, $29.95, now available)

An excellent example of the experimental first years of the OAV genre is "The Time Étranger." Rather than re-making the TV show "GoShogun" it was based on (some readers may remember this as one-half of the short-lived '80s American anime show "Macron One"), the writers stripped everything down to the interesting characters and flashed forward to their future, when they reunite to gather around the hospital bed of teammate Remy Shimada, who is dying of a degenerative nerve disorder. But Remy's struggle for life takes place not here, but in a mysterious dream city where she and her comrades find themselves under a sentence of death eager to be handed out by its fanatical inhabitants. With an appealing heroine, it's a fierce, baffling and sometimes horrific thriller that might be compared to "Jacob's Ladder."

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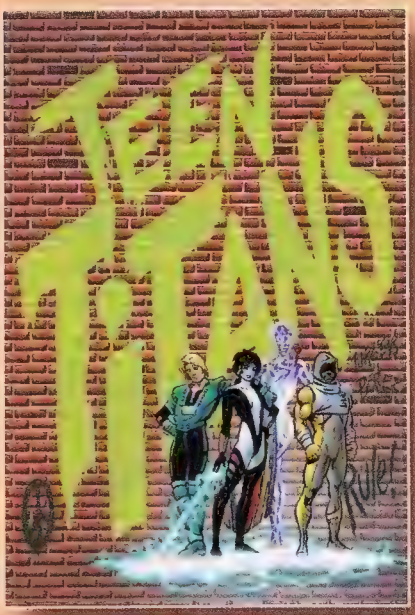
JLA #1




THE TEEN TITANS #1

**GRAND PRIZE (1):** One (and only one) Scavenger will make the big time and walk off with the killer grand prize: The Ultimate Comic Art Gallery. Through the generous donations of the folks listed below, the big winner will walk off with **20 framed pieces of original comic art!** And there ain't no ham-'n'-eggers in this crowd, either...

**ART ADAMS**
Creator of *Monkeyman & O'Brien*

**DAN JURGENS**
The man writing and penciling *The Teen Titans*

**CHRIS BACHALO**
Artist on Marvel's *Generation X*

**JOSEPH MICHAEL LINSNER**
Creator of *Dawn*

**JIM BALENT**
Artist on DC's *Catwoman* and Chaos! Comics' *Purgatori*

**DAVID MACK**
Creator of *Kabuki*

**BRIAN BOLLAND**
DC cover artist and creator of "Mr. Mamoulian" in *Negative Burn*

**JOE MADUREIRA**
Marvel's *Uncanny X-Men* artist

**AMANDA CONNER**
Artist on Harris Comics' *Vengeance of Vampirella*

**TERRY MOORE**
Creator of *Strangers in Paradise*

**GERHARD**
Inker on Aardvark-Vanaheim's *Cerebus*

**JIMMY PALMIOTTI AND JOE QUESADA**
Creators of Event Comics' *Ash*

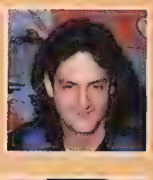
**TOM GRUMMETT**
He of *Superboy* and *Superman: The Man of Tomorrow* fame

**JOHN ROMITA, JR.**
Artist on Marvel's *Spider-Man*

**STEVEN HUGHES AND JASON JENSEN**
Chaos! Comics' *Lady Death* art team

**BILL SIENKIEWICZ**
Noted cover artist and recent *Magic: The Gathering* artist

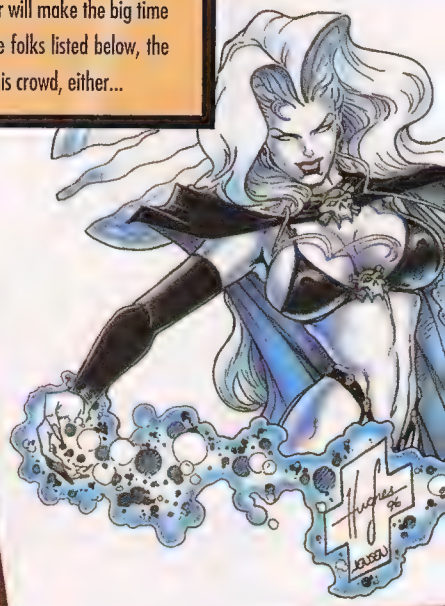
**STUART IMMONEN**
Artist on DC's *Legion of Super-Heroes*



**JEFF SMITH**
Creator of *Bone*

**KELLEY JONES**
DC Comics' *Batman* artist

**CHARLES VESS**
Noted DC cover artist and creator of *Ballads and Sagas*



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# RUNNER UPS (100):

'Course, even if you're not the grand poobah, you could still walk away with some neat swag if you're one of our 100 **RUNNER-UP** winners. Everybody here walks off with a prize package including:

- A copy of *Justice League of America* #1 autographed by artist Howard Porter
- A copy of *The Teen Titans* #1 autographed by writer/artist Dan Jurgens
- A nickel-plated Superman "S" shield pin
- A package of five DC backlist trade paperbacks
- A Fleer/SkyBox International *DC OverPower* starter deck
- A package of five *Wizard* mini-comics
- A new nifty-swell *Wizard* T-shirt
- A complete set of *Wizard* trading cards
- A copy of *Wizard* #1, the issue that started it all for us, signed by the Big Cheese himself, Gareb Shamus!
- One of the new Kenner DC Total Justice action figures—Batman, Robin, Flash, Green Lantern, Aquaman or Darkseid

# WANNA GET IN? HERE'S HOW!

Turn the page. See all that stuff listed there? Each item or answer is worth a certain point value. Get the goods, find the answers, bundle 'em up (all in the same box!) and send 'em in. Top point total wins and all ties will be decided by random drawing.

And make sure to use your official *Wizard* Scavenger Hunt checklist (or a photocopy of a friend's, if you're on the cheap side) found in the polybag of this very issue! It's worth points to you just to use it!

***Official sponsor of the Wizard Scavenger Hunt***

# ITEMS AND POINTS

1) A little plastic dinosaur (3)
2) UPC bar code cut from any packaging (2)
3) Ping-pong ball. Not King Kong balls! We said ping-pong balls! (2)
4) A red pen (2)
5) An empty cassette tape case (2)
6) Wiffle ball (3)
7) Any Mr. Potato Head piece (2)
8) Black fine point permanent marker (3)
9) A Frisbee (3)
10) Any Smurfs toy (5)
11) A Legion of Super-Heroes membership card. If you can't find one, make one (3)
12) Unused, wrapped adhesive bandage (like a Band-Aid) with a picture of a comic or cartoon character on it (3)
13) Garbage Pail Kids sticker (3)
14) Any rubber insect (3)
15) Any *Magic: The Gathering* card (2)
16) Any Barbie doll accessory or clothing (3)
17) Three different colored Legos (1 point each, 3 points total)
18) Any jawbreaker candy in a plastic wrapper (2)
19) Boomerang! (3)
20) Any item with the word "China" printed on it (2)
21) A 20-sided die. You know, like dice. You've seen the ones with six sides. We want one with 20 sides. (3)
22) A Sea Monkeys ad (3)
23) Something glow-in-the-dark (2)
24) Viewmaster disc (7)
25) Bumper sticker with the name of a college on it (3)
26) Silk flower (3)
27) Any toy shaped like a motorcycle (5)
28) A sponge (2)
29) Stationery from any business (2)
30) Any non-United States coin (5)
31) Hostess ad (or photocopy) from old Marvel comics that has a Marvel hero hawking some cream-filled delicacy (3)
32) Red rubber ball (2)
33) Any toy or novelty item that looks like a fake eyeball (3)
34) SkyBox *Lois & Clark* trading card #34 (Featuring DC editor Mike Carlin!) (3)
35) Atari or Intellivision video game cartridge (7)
36) Sunday comics section from any newspaper (3)
37) A blank Rolodex card (3)
38) Any flier or sticker from an oil change joint (2)
39) SkyBox *Simpsons* trading card (3)
40) The month of April torn from a calendar (2)
41) Ticket stub from any movie (3)
42) Taco Bell coupon, rain check or gift certificate (3)
43) Any air freshener with an adhesive backing on it. You know, like a Stick-Up. (3)
44) Kool-Aid package, empty (3)
45) A photo of you, looking very goofy in a public place and reading an issue of *Wizard* (20)
46) *DC OverPower* logo, cut out from anywhere (2)
47) Newspaper photo of Theodore Kaczynski, a.k.a. "The Unabomber" (3)
48) Anything written by Stephen King (3)
49) AA-size battery (3)
50) Coffee mug (3)
51) A DC character Pez dispenser (7)
52) Recipe for any shrimp dish (2)
53) A picture of the number "53" on a truck (5)
54) One shoelace, unbroken (2)
55) The business card of someone named "Pat" (3)
56) Birthday card (3)
57) Postcard picturing any body of water (3)
58) Any He-Man and the Masters of the Universe action figure (7)
59) A Koosh ball (5)
60) Any bean bag animal toy (5)
61) Any aquarium accessory (3)
62) Football card of any San Diego Chargers player (3)
63) Photo of the Talking Heads. The band, you idiot! (5)
64) Anything with a picture of the Blues Brothers on it (10)
65) Any McDonald's "Happy Meal" toy (3)
66) Any sports team pennant (5)
67) A copy of the old DC comic *Atari Force* (3)
68) Deck of cards smaller in dimension than $2\frac{1}{2}$-by $3\frac{1}{2}$ (5)
69) Fleer/SkyBox *Superman Action Packs* wrapper, empty (2)
70) Your Scavenger Hunt Checklist, all filled out and ready to roll (5)

# QUESTIONS AND POINTS

71) Which Hall of Fame baseball team owner once sent a midget up to bat? (5)
72) Who is credited with developing alternating current and later selling the patent to Westinghouse? (5)
73) What is the secret identity of DC's Golden Age Sandman? (5)
74) What is the name of Captain Kirk's best buddy from his Academy days, who he later had to kill? (5)
75) By what common name is the chemical compound hydrogen hydroxide known? (5)

# IMPORTANT DO'S AND DON'TS!

1) Use one package and one package only to send your entry! If you send multiple packages, we count them as separate entries and you'll never win!

2) Use the official checklist! It's worth five points just to fill it out! Trust us—you'll need those points!

3) Unless otherwise noted, send only one item for each numbered entry! You do NOT score extra points for sending multiples!

4) **SEND YOUR ENTRY TO:**
**Scavenger Hunt IV**
**c/o Wizard Press**
**151 Wells Ave.**
**Congers, NY 10920**

**Now get your rear in gear. The deadline's December 2, 1996 and the clock just started ticking.**

# LEGAL WORDS

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, DC Comics, their immediate families and anybody who sends their entries in multiple packages. You really cheese-off our warehouse guy Donato when you do that. Donato's a large man. You shouldn't cheese him off. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the Scavenger Hunt Checklist or a 3-by-5-inch index card and enclose with your Scavenger Hunt entry. Enter as many times as you like. Each entry must be mailed in a single secure package or envelope. Each package will be considered a separate entry. Small items such as a jawbreaker or business card should be secured to a 3-by-5-inch index card to prevent loss during shipping. All Scavenger Hunt questions must be answered on the Scavenger Hunt Checklist or a single, separate sheet of paper. Mail your entry to: Scavenger Hunt IV, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. We have yet to hear a sentence that ends "...and get that monkey out of my pants!" We're not sure if it's because monkeys don't wear pants or if it's just that having a monkey in your pants is pleasurable. Prizes are awarded in the name of contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by DECEMBER 2, 1996.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press based on greatest point total with random drawing breaking all ties. The drawing, if necessary, will take place on January 6, 1997.

For a list of winners, available after January 6, 1997, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Scavenger Hunt IV Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Or if ya don't like that, try checking out Wizard World on America Online after January 6, 1997. We'll post winners there, too.

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# THE TOY CHEST

# DC'S DARK KNIGHT AND MAN OF STEEL GET BIG

FAO Schwarz will dazzle toy fans this November with the release of exclusive "History of Batman" and "History of Superman" action figure three-packs. Produced by Hasbro New Ventures, each "History" will contain three 12-inch figures of DC's two most popular superheroes as they appeared in the 1940s, 1970s and 1990s, respectively. The new figures feature brand-new 32-point articulation, as well as individual cloth costumes and facial sculptings for each period. In addition, four collector cards will be issued with each set—each reproducing a relevant Superman or Batman cover from the various time periods, plus a brand new card exclusive to the set. Suggested retail for each three-figure set will be $99.99.

In an unrelated deal, New Ventures will also issue a two-pack featuring Batman (in a design based on the comics "KnightsEnd" storyline) and Catwoman exclusively through Toys R Us. The 12-inch figures, due to hit stores in November, will have an approximate asking price of $49.99.

FAO Schwarz's exclusive Batman and Superman 12-inch figures

## SPAWNING GROUNDS

McFarlane Toys is already gearing up for 1997 with seven new figures in its Spawn line slated for a January release: Phlebiac Skeleton with kitty; Psycho Bum with a weed-whacker, jackhammer, switchblade leg knife and a Cornboy tattoo (don't ask); Spawn 3 with cloth cape, owl and bat; Wolf Spawn with staff; and Zombie Spawn with chainsaw and sawed-off shotgun. Rounding out the group is a two-pack that includes police detectives Sam Burke and "Twitch" Williams. Repaints will follow shortly thereafter.

Following the summer release of Medieval Spawn, gold repainted versions of Overt-kill, Tremor and Clown will be issued as Kay-Bee exclusives this fall.

In addition, this fall will see the release of Mutant Spawn, a special edition highly articulated figure boxed like Future Spawn. Originally called "Chameleon Spawn," the name was changed because McFarlane Toys was unable to get the figure to actually change colors.

And beginning with Series 5 of the Spawn line, McFarlane Toys has re-designed its packaging to be more customer-friendly. Now, the name of each figure appears quite visibly on the card front for easy identification. McFarlane Toys will also change the card color with each new series so collectors can tell at a glance what they're buying.

Thanks to brisk sales of the 13-inch Spawn and Angela figures, McFarlane Toys has stated that it will indeed produce double-sized figures of Medieval Spawn and Violator in time for Christmas. In addition, the company plans to issue unpainted versions of its oversized figures beginning late this fall. Collectors should note that the unpainted figures will be offered only through direct market comic and hobby shops.

In *Wizard #59* it was reported that comic retailers ordering *Spawn* #50 would receive an exclusive Spawn figure for every 50 copies purchased. The figure, with an expected production run of 5,000-6,000 pieces, was to feature the brand new Spawn face unveiled in issue #50. What the new face looked like was a heavily guarded secret, but we now know. Similar to the previously released Spawn "hamburger head" figure, the new Spawn features sharp fangs and worms crawling through exposed muscle and bone. Hobbyists were paying a pre-sell price of $100-150 for the figure now being referred to as "Worm Head" Spawn. (YUCK!)

McFarlane Toys' latest monstrosity—Mutant Spawn

## TOY BIZ'S PSYLOCKE TURNS ELEKTRA

Recent rumors have abounded over the low numbers of Toy Biz Psylocke figures hitting the stands. One such rumor maintained that Psylocke was so rare because the figure's head actually kept falling off—a belief that has since been dispelled. "That's total bunk," says Toy Biz Product Manager Jesse Falcon.

BY **DAN ALBAUGH AND THE *WIZARD* STAFF**

"The reason she's shipping late is because we kept tooling around with the final sculpting." Falcon states that Psylocke is currently shipping at three figures per case of 16. Get her while she's hot, though—after a 500,000 production on the entire line, Toy Biz will "re-deco" the Psylocke figure, painting her to be the company's very first Elektra figure!

In the Amazing Spider-Man line, the new Stealth Venom figure will undergo a similar change soon—after a production of 100,000 pieces, the figure, currently a transparent opaque design with white-painted features, will be "re-decoed" totally clear with black-painted features.

Elsewhere, in the 10-inch X-Men line, look for a "classic" Wolverine in his brown and tan costume.

Hammerhead from Power of the Force

## NEW TO THE FORCE

Kenner has confirmed which figures will be included in the Star Wars Power of the Force assortment due out in late November. Look for Luke Skywalker in Stormtrooper disguise, Tusken Raider (Sand People), Tatooine Stormtrooper, Greedo, Hammerhead and Death Star Gunner. Suggested retail will be $5.99 per figure.

By the time you read this, Shadows of the Empire figues should have already hit the shelves. Not listed in initial reports are the Luke Skywalker in Jedi Knight Uniform and Han Solo in Carbonite figures—both of which should be currently available.

Sources at Kenner state that both Luke Skywalker figures (Dagobah Fatigues and X-Wing Pilot) as well as Darth Vader can be found with two different lightsaber sizes (3-3/4" and 2-3/4"). These sources insist that there aren't two different sizes for the short lightsaber as has been rumored by toy fans—unless collectors consider less than 1/8 of an inch to be a noticeable size difference. Additionally, the bubble packaging for each figure was changed to accommodate the smaller lightsabers, but not before short lightsabers were placed in long bubbles. It appears the "short lightsaber/long bubble" variation is the toughest of the bunch to find, with retailers asking only a slight premium of $2-$5 for figures with long lightsabers and up to $10 for the "short lightsaber/long bubble" variant.

Recent hobby rumors have circulated involving the Star Wars Speeder Bike (with Biker Scout figure) as the victim of a product recall. One source indicated that Kenner was dealing with a vehicle breakage problem, while another claimed the recall resulted from the use of lead paint on the toy. According to Kenner, both rumors are preposterous. "We want to set the record straight once and for all," says Kenner Public Relations Manager Holly Ingram. "There is no recall on this product. There never has been one. This item does not contain lead paint. We at Kenner and Hasbro Inc. take product safety very seriously and we conduct extensive safety testing on all our toys."

And finally, Hasbro recently confirmed that the second series of 12-inch Star Wars figures scheduled to ship in February, will include Chewbacca, Luke Skywalker in Bespin Fatigues, Lando Calrissian and a Tusken Raider. The first series, which should already be in stores, will sport totally re-sculpted heads. W

*Dan Albaugh just recently had his head re-sculpted.*

(Clockwise from top): the 12-inch Ben, Han, Darth and Luke get a face-lift

## WISH LIST

### THE 10 ACTION FIGURES THAT WIZARD WANTS TO SEE MADE

(AND SOON)

**1) Classic X-Men Xavier's School Gift Set (X-Men)**
A mondo-retro assortment featuring all the characters in their original black-and-yellow uniforms. They be: Iceman (the booted, snowy guy) w/ hurling snowballs, Cyclops w/ snap-on optic beams, Beast (de-furred) w/ leapin' tumblin' action, a wing-flapping Angel, Jean Grey w/ snap-on "telekinetic" shield and restraining coil (like Iceman II's snap-on oversized hands), and a wheelchair-bound Professor X. (Don't look underneath the blanket!) Plus, an official graduation diploma from Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters comes as a nifty extra!

**2) Jean Grey (X-Men)**
We're all chomping at the bit for a Jean Grey figure in her latest orange-and-blue costume. With removable Cerebro helmet and snap-on "Phoenix Force" energy-burst, this gal will be all ready to take on.

**3) Onslaught (X-Men)**
This oversized Onslaught figure would include a regular-sized Professor X that "hides" inside. Give this palooka "light up" eyes and you can clean house!

**4) Princess Leia in Jabba's Slave Get-Up (Star Wars)**
Leia in a bikini. Even Luke would give this one a thumbs-up...and he's her brother for cryin' out loud! This figure comes equipped with a removable Jabba-chokin' choker chain.

**5) Wedge Antilles (Star Wars)**
Heck, he's the only rebel pilot with a speaking role (other than Luke, of course) to survive all three movies! Give him a removable pilot's helmet and a blaster, and he'll go gunnin' for the Empire!

**6) "Mirror Universe" Star Trek Set (Star Trek)**
Armed with phasers, communicators and agonizers, the alternate universe Trekkies are a must-have! Thrill to Spock's goatee! Marvel at Sulu's scar! Swoon over the muscle-shirted Kirk (w/stylish sash yet!), and more!

**7) "Dark Knight Returns" Action Two-Pack (Batman)**
With six jillion crappy Bat-variations already pumped out by Kenner, it's odd that they haven't done one based on Frank Miller's Dark Knight. Fully poseable (unlike those weak Legends of Batman toys), armed with batarangs, grappling cables and Anti-Superman snap-on armor, the package is complete with scale-size Carrie Kelly Robin action figure (toting slingshot, of course).

**8) Amalgam Heroes (DC/Marvel Heroes)**
Fans everywhere are clamoring for figures based on the Marvel/DC Amalgam Universe. So how 'bout an assortment that includes Dark Claw, Dr. Strangefate, Spider-Boy, Super-Soldier and Dr. Doomsday?

**9) Dawn (Dawn)**
Sirius Comics' resident femme fatale would make a pretty neat figure, and while she wouldn't be loaded down with weird toy gimmicks, she would come with "real" hair (like McFarlane Toys' Angela) and various interchangeable outfits.

**10) Thor (Marvel Heroes)**
Just in time to coincide with his "Heroes Reborn" relaunch with the Avengers, Asgard's favorite son would make for a great new action figure. Accessorize him with that nifty Uru hammer and "forearm spinning" action (like Batman: TAS' Scarecrow), and this guy is ready to go!

**Hey!** We've spoken and the toy companies are listening! Some of the figures we've plugged have already gone into production! Your votes count! Drop us a note with your "dream figures" at:

Toy Wish List
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920
Or e-mail us at WizardTGTC@aol.com.

# HOMEMADE HEROES

## THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES.

All of the following figures were made from plain old, ordinary figures and household materials, and each of these talented creators will receive two 5-inch Toy Biz Marvel action figures. The Runner-Up will also get a 10-inch Toy Biz Marvel action figure, and the Grand Prize Winner beams up all that stuff *plus* a Toy Biz Marvel model kit. Fine work, folks!

Thanks to the Toy Biz folks for their generous donation of prizes! You guys are the bubbles in our bath!

## GRAND PRIZE

**"STAR TREK": MIRROR UNIVERSE**
**John Arnold of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa**
Check out these awesome Classic Star Trek figures altered to look like their mirrored selves. Hey, Playmates—you lookin' at this?

## RUNNER-UP

**GREEN LANTERN CORPS**
**Gil Vazquez of Elmhurst, N.Y.**
We recognize a Toy Biz Terrax, a Kenner animated Batman, a Kenner Super Powers Superman, a Kenner Super Powers GL, an old Kenner Star Wars Bib Fortuna and a Toy Biz Ch'od, but the figure Gil transformed into Jack T. Chance (the purple guy) is a mystery.

## JUSTICE SOCIETY

**Charlee Flatt of New Port Rickey, Fla.**

As always, Charlee used your basic Mego base model, but hand-sewed all the costumes for Green Lantern, Dr. Mid-Nite and Dr. Fate, along with hand-sculpting their heads.

## SANDTROOPER

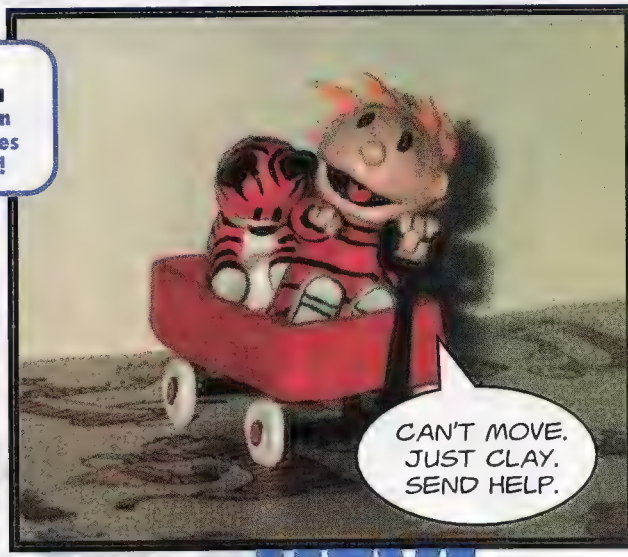
**Gary Weaver of Norman, Okla.**

Taking the Stormtrooper from the recent SW series, Gary weaved (Get it, "Gary Weaver"? Um, ahem.) together this Sandtrooper using sheet plastic, a resin cast backpack and a custom card to get the full effect.

## CALVIN & HOBBES

**Kristian Aus of New Castle, Australia**

Using her Calvin-like imagination, Kristian created this snazzy-looking Calvin & Hobbes completely from modeling clay. Good job!



## SPACE GHOST

**Michael Jaecks of Minneapolis, Minn.**

Sppaaaaaace Ghoooost was crafted from a Kenner Batman: TAS figure, a modified Kenner LOB Cyborg Batman's cape and a little paint.

## HEY!

If you're interested in entering the homemade figure contest, send well lit, clear, color photographs (No Polaroids, and put 'em in a cool or funny pose!), along with your name, address, description of how you created your figure, and your full phone number (including area code) to:

**HOMEMADE HEROES**
**c/o Wizard Press**
**PO Box 118**
**Congers, NY 10920-0118**

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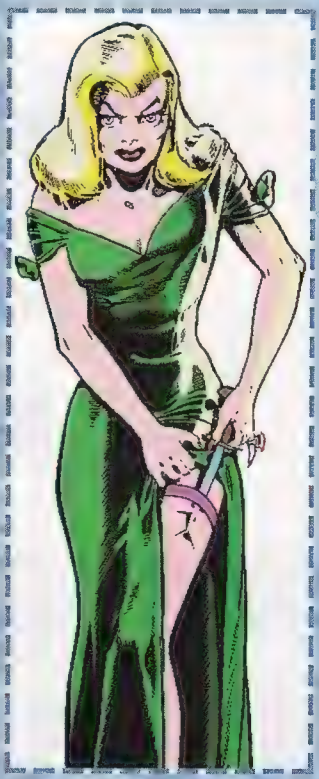
# The Will Eisner Trivia Contest

**Okay,** there's nothing trivial about Will Eisner. He's been around since the beginning of time, or at least the beginning of comic time. With works ranging from *The Spirit* to *Invisible People,* Eisner has proven himself to be perhaps the greatest graphic storyteller ever.

If you're smart enough, you might get your hands on this comic legend! Just answer a few questions:

1. What is The Spirit's Real Name?
2. Where is The Spirit's hideout?
3. What was Will Eisner's first graphic novel?



## PRIZES

**Grand Prize (1):** One reader will win a "Skinny Bones" serigraph signed and numbered by Will Eisner himself. This piece of art comes from a limited edition of only 200 hand-pulled silk-screen prints on archival paper.

**Second Prize (1):** One reader will win a "Gerhard Shnobble" Print, signed and numbered by Will Eisner.

**Third Prize (2):** Two readers will each get a *Will Eisner Sketchbook* hardcover, signed and numbered by Will Eisner (from a limited edition of 500) and a copy of the *Dropsie Avenue: The Neighborhood* softcover.

**Fourth Prize (5):** Five readers will each get *The Spirit Casebook* softcover.

**Fifth Prize (10):** Ten readers each walk away with *The Spirit Collector Card* set.

**This contest is sponsored by Kitchen Sink Press, publishers of lots of cool stuff**

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**Fill this out, put it in an envelope and send it to: Will Eisner Trivia Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Deadline is October 31, 1996. So pick 'dem brains!**

## Legal Trivia

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Kitchen Sink Press and their immediate families or P'Gell. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form, a standard postcard or a 3-by-5-inch index card. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Will Eisner Trivia Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by October 31, 1996.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected by random drawing from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press. Drawing will take place on November 15,1996.

For a list of winners, available after November 15, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Will Eisner Trivia Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

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## Will Eisner Trivia Contest Entry Form

**DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 31, 1996!**

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

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2. _____
3. _____

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# PICKS

**WIZARD's list of must-read comic books coming out in September**

# SUPERMAN ADVENTURES #1

**Writer:** Paul Dini
**Artists:** Rick Burchett & Terry Austin
**Release Date:** September 4
**Cover Price:** $1.75

**DC COMICS** Here comes a comic that replicates the style of the new "Superman" animated series on the WB television network, much as *Batman and Robin Adventures* carries the feel of Fox's Batman cartoons. The series makes its debut with an issue written by Paul Dini, who is the producer of both the Superman and Batman cartoons, and wrote the acclaimed one-shot, *The Batman Adventures: Mad Love*. After that, Scott McCloud of *Understanding Comics* fame will be writing it on an ongoing basis.

The first tale of this out-of-continuity series (meaning it has no impact on the other four monthly Superman titles) deals with citizens' reactions to Superman's arrival in Metropolis, says editor Mike McAvennie. "It helps introduce readers to our cast of characters." That cast includes the usual suspects: Perry White, Jimmy Olsen, Lex Luthor and, of course, Lois Lane. "Lois will be played as a very, very tough go-getter," McAvennie explains. She and Clark won't necessarily be rivals, he adds, because Lois is a well established reporter when Clark hits town. "She thinks of him as a country bumpkin, even calling him 'Smallville.' "

Reporter Ron Troupe, with a bigger and bulkier look, will play a larger role in this series than he has in Superman's other comics, McAvennie notes. New to the comics cast will be Angela Chen, a columnist and newscaster for a "Current Affair"-type show who also will be featured in the cartoons. "Our idea is to inject new blood into the series and update the cast," he says.

The book's art style, by Rick Burchett and Terry Austin, will mirror the cartoony look used in the popular *Batman and Robin Adventures* title. "One of the things that is tricky is that people assume the stories are simple because of the art style," McAvennie says. "That's a big mistake. The stories *are* simple, but they're not simplistic. They'll be solid, strong stories that people of all ages can enjoy."

**If you like *Superman Adventures*, *Wizard* recommends you read...** *Batman and Robin Adventures*, which does for Batman what this does for Superman—simple, solid stories with great art. Some of the best Bat-tales of late have come outta this book.

# THE BLACK LAMB #1

**Writer:** Tim Truman
**Artist:** Tim Truman
**Release Date:** Tim Truman
(or, September 11)
**Cover Price:** Tim Truman (nope, $2.50)

**TIM—NO, WAIT IT'S DC/HELIX** "Anything that lives under your bed will be in this one," promises Tim Truman about *Black Lamb*, his six-part mini-series for DC's new Helix imprint of science fiction-themed books. The story is simple, he notes: "It's about a vampire vampire-hunter hunter," which reads a lot better than saying it aloud.

The tale, which Truman both writes and draws, takes place in a future in which monsters have been driven underground due to persecution and genocide by humans. Part of the reason for that is a pocket of vampires who think of people like you and me as "meat." They're making tensions rise on both sides. To keep them in line—and to protect other monsters from Specialists, the humans who hunt monsters to eliminate them—the Council of Monsters calls on Black Lamb.

"He's the monsters' hero—their protector," Truman explains. "He's a mercenary vampire who's called on by the Council to keep this subculture of vampires from attracting too much human attention."

Why do vampires need a hero to protect them? "It turns out that a lot of the lore about vampires is myth," Truman says. "They're not that powerful. They come out at night because that's when they're not hunted. They don't drink human blood because they're more civilized than that. And most of them aren't immortal, because to become immortal, you have to drink the blood of another vampire. They consider that to be murder, so they have a natural feeling of reprehension about it." But Black Lamb himself is immortal, he adds. "The circumstances surrounding how he took the blood of another vampire turn out to be quite tragic."

If this is sounding like a bit of a downer, don't worry. "It's going to be a really fun comic," Truman says. "I started out drawing it dark, but my son enjoyed the pages so much I decided to make it into a real good action/adventure comic story for kids instead. But I hope I've thrown in enough underlying messages and themes [such as the impact of racism and genocide] to please adults as well.

"I've never had more fun doing anything than I'm having doing this," he admits. "The stories are just ripping outta me. It's also the first time I've ever felt really good about the artwork I've done. I definitely want to do more Black Lamb stories after this one's over."

■ Big Picks written by Craig Shutt

**If you like *The Black Lamb*, *Wizard* recommends you read...** Mike Mignola's *Hellboy: Wake the Devil* (on sale now from Dark Horse), which features a cool vampire tale. Some other supercool Tim Truman stuff includes DC's *Hawkworld* mini-series (an awesome Hawkman revamp) and Eclipse's *Scout*.

# MORE PICKS

TITLES DENOTED WITH A **MR** CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

## AQUAMAN #26

**DC COMICS** Uh-oh...DC's big crossover, *Final Night*, has the Sun-Eater extinguishing the sun and DC's heroes are powerless to restart it. Now if you think it's gonna get cold up on the surface, think about how them Atlanteans are gonna feel when their cities begin to ice over. Can Aquaman find a way to keep the oceans from freezing? Safety tip: Don't use electric blankets. By Peter David, J. Calafiore and Peter Palmiotti. **$1.75**

## ASTRO CITY (VOL. 2) #2

**HOMAGE** Ever wonder what it's like being a member of a superhero family? Well, in this ish you'll get an in-depth look at Astra, the youngest member of Astro City's First Family. Find out her hopes, fears, favorite Olsen twin and why she just wants to be a normal kid. By Kurt Busiek, Brent Anderson and Will Blyberg. **$2.50**

## AVENGERS #1

**MARVEL** It's an all-new direction for Earth's Mightiest Heroes. First Captain America was found in a block of ice (but that never happened, right?), now Thor's found in a block of amber! (Mmm...nougaty Norse God.) Once Thor gets out, he and his brother Loki start duking it out in a major way and it's up to Cap and his team to break things up. By Rob Liefeld, Jim Valentino, Chap Yaep, Jonathan Sibal and Marlo Alquiza. **$2.50**

## BATMAN #536

**DC COMICS** Whaddaya do if you're a hungry Man-Bat and the sun goes out? (Damn Sun-Eater.) You start eating people! And who better to chow down on than the fine folks of Gotham City? (Though personally, we'd hit Taco Bell first.) Batman's gotta find his winged-counterpart and save everyone from his rampage...so they can all die when the Earth freezes over anyway. By Doug Moench, Kelley Jones and John Beatty. **$1.95**

## THE BATMAN & ROBIN ADVENTURES #12

**DC COMICS** Rupert Thorne's in deep poop when Bane comes after him, seeking revenge. (Thorne last messed with Bane back in that great "Batman: The Animated Series" episode.) And what's he got planned? Why, killing Thorne, of course—right in front of Batman! Being the good guy that he is, Bats can't allow that, so he's just gonna have to kick Bane's butt—again. Chump. By Ty Templeton, Brandon Kruse and Rick Burchett. **$1.75**

ASTRO CITY (VOL. 2) #2

BONE #26

CAPTAIN AMERICA #1

DAREDEVIL #368

## THE BATMAN & ROBIN ADVENTURES ANNUAL #1

**DC COMICS** Ughhh...remember that god-awful animated Batman flick? "Mask of the Phantasm"? Well, here's the sequel. Andrea Beaumont, better known as Phantasm, returns to Gotham City to stop an assassin from killing her old flame, Bruce Wayne. Then she and Bats team up to find out who ordered the hit on Wayne, but they're in for a biiiiig surprise when the answer is revealed. (The only way we'll like this is if the assassin turns out to be a loaded Aunt Harriet.) By Paul Dini, Ty Templeton, Mike Parobeck and others. **$2.95**

## BIRDS OF PREY: MANHUNT #3 (OF 4)

**DC COMICS** Black Canary's been taken prisoner and it's up to fellow Y-chromosome heroines Catwoman and the Huntress to find her. The trail leads them to Kazakhistan, a city of refugees that's ruled by the woman who kicked Batman's ass—Lady Shiva. And if she can beat up Bats, what chance do three broads have? (We're gonna get mail on that last crack.) By Chuck Dixon, Matt Haley and Wade Von Grawbadger. **$1.95**

## BLOODY MARY #2

**HELIX/DC** Anderton, that parasite-enhanced villain, runs off to Amsterdam with Bloody Mary and the Major right behind him. There, they take to the skies for one of the deadliest air battles of all time! Plus, the assassin Vatman ("dananananana...Vatman!") closes in for the kill. By Garth Ennis and Carlos Ezquerra. **$2.25**

## BONE #26

**IMAGE** With the sun extinguished thanks to the Sun-Eater, Phone Bone freezes solid and his flesh splits open like an over-inflated water balloon...wait. That's Vertigo Bone. In this issue of

# MORE PICKS

Image *Bone*, the townspeople form a mob to go and kill a dragon, and Thorn reaches an incredibly important moment in her life—puberty! Actually, it's called The Turning and it's a moment that will forever change her. By Jeff Smith. Smith says, "This is one of those key issues that was planned out from the very beginning of the *Bone* series. I'm excited about it, but I'm a little nervous too. Not only is this a turning point for Thorn, it's a turning point for the whole series!" **$2.95**

## CAPTAIN AMERICA #1

**MARVEL COMICS** America is in ruins. The neo-Nazis and the Red Skull are in total control. Is there anyone who can defeat them and give the people back their freedom? Why, only one man can! Only...(key the music)...The Brown Hornet! Actually, he hasn't been licensed to Liefeld yet. So it must be Captain America. By Rob Liefeld, Chuck Dixon, Jeph Loeb and Jonathan Sibal. **$2.95**

## CATWOMAN #39

**DC COMICS** "Catwoman: Year One," Part 2 (of 3). Catwoman's "stealing" of the Joker, Penguin and Two-Face was actually just a ruse to draw attention away from an Egyptian dignitary, her *real* target. When something unexpected pops up, she's gotta join Batman to straighten things out. By Doug Moench, Jim Balent and Mark Pennington. **$1.95**

## DAREDEVIL #358

**MARVEL COMICS** The team of Karl Kesel and Cary Nord has brought Daredevil back to his roots while updating him for today's audience, making *DD* one of the most entertaining superhero comics in the market today. Take our word for it, *Daredevil* is a must-read! Alright...enough of the hype. This ish: a new villainess is dogging Daredevil...and she won't stop until one of them's dead. By Karl Kesel, Cary Nord and Matt Ryan. **$1.50**

## DETECTIVE COMICS #703

**DC COMICS** Well, the sun has gone out and like the mindless, frightened sheep that humans are, we panic. Can the combined might of Batman, Robin and Nightwing keep the crazed people of Gotham from looting, rioting and kicking puppies? By Chuck Dixon, Graham Nolan and Scott Hanna. **$1.95**

FANTASTIC FOUR #1

FAX FROM SARAJEVO

FINAL NIGHT #1

FINAL NIGHT #2

## DRYWALL: UNZIPPED!

**FIREMAN PRESS** Drywall, Scud, the Disposable Assassin's sidekick (and man of a thousand zippers) finds out he may be the main reason everyone on Scud's world is crazy! And, on top of that, one of his brothers goes to Hell to take it over! What's a zipper-covered, trans-dimensional sidekick to do? By Rob Schrab. Schrab says, "It's a pretty important issue as far as the Scud Universe is concerned. We're going to find out that Drywall has a lot to do with why Scud's world is so bizarre. Not only is it going to be about Drywall, but it will be about his brothers—there's more than one Drywall." **$2.95**

## FANTASTIC FOUR #1

**MARVEL COMICS** Deja vu time kiddies...join us this ish as four friends rocket themselves into space, get exposed to some nasty cosmic rays and find themselves transformed into a stretchy guy, a big lumpy orange tough guy, a fiery guy and an invisible chick. And Dr. Doom's in it, too. By Jim Lee, Brandon Choi and Scott Williams. **$2.95**

## FAX FROM SARAJEVO

**DARK HORSE** This is not your happy-go-lucky kind of story. This is real life. What you'll read in these pages are the true events of what was happening in Sarajevo, Bosnia during the war in 1992, and the horrors people faced every day there. Joe Kubert took faxes he received from a friend trapped in Bosnia and adapted them into this full-color, hardcover graphic novel. If you want a true-life nail-biting tale, pick this one up. By Joe Kubert, who says, "Believe me, the comic book doesn't come anywhere near what actually happened to this guy. It was a horrible thing and it was nothing short of a miracle that they were able to get out. I don't know if I would have done this book had, God forbid, anything happened to him or his family." **$24.95**

## FINAL NIGHT #1-#4

**DC COMICS** Either God flipped the wrong switch or the

# MORE PICKS

Sun-Eater's back. Whatever the case, the sun's gone out and the Earth is startin' to freeze. It's up to the various heroes of the DC Universe to keep the people under control and find a way to undo the damage. But how do you turn the sun back on? (Geez, thank goodness for comic book physics or they'd never re-light that thing.) By Karl Kesel, Stuart Immonen and Jose Marzan Jr. Kesel says, "*Final Night* is about the heroes and what it takes to be a hero in the DC Universe. DC actually hired Larry Niven to talk to me for a couple of hours and we worked through the theoretical implications of a force like the Sun-Eater and what would happen to the sun and to the Earth. Larry supplied a pivotal moment in the story that I never would have guessed at." **$1.95 EACH**

## FLASH #119

**DC COMICS** When Flash's girl Linda Park lets the world know that even the heroes won't be able to stop the Sun-Eater, Flash must deal with the panic. Sheesh, some girlfriend she turned out to be! Will the speedster be quick enough to stop the madness? By Mark Waid, Brian Augustyn, Paul Ryan and Jose Marzan Jr. **$1.75**

## GREEN LANTERN #80

**DC COMICS** The sun might have gone out, but there's still light in the world—*Dr. Light*, that is. And boy is he pissed. After being trapped in GL's power battery since God knows when, he's back. And not only is he more powerful than before, he can control Kyle's energy creations. By Ron Marz, J.H. Williams III and Mick Gray. **$1.75**

## HELLBOY: WAKE THE DEVIL #4 (OF 5)

**DARK HORSE** Hellboy finally offs the vampire Giurescu and is all set to down some brews when the bloodsucker's mistress, Hecate, shows up. Turns out, she's some ancient spirit of chaos and, yeah, she's kinda pissed at Hellboy for killing her man. Ah, the power of love. By Mike Mignola. **$2.95**

## HITMAN #7

**DC COMICS** Johnny Navarone went one step too far in trying to get Hitman—he killed his buddy Pat. So now Hitman and Natt are on his trail and they won't be satisfied with anything less than blood, guts and the dying screams of Johnny Navarone. Also check out *Hitman* #8 this month (*two* issues, what a bargain!), where the world's dying because the sun's out, so Hitman and his boys lock themselves inside Noonan's Bar, grab some booze and reminisce about their brushes with death. A bunch of drunk, gun-totin' maniacs locked in one building? Heck, sounds just like the *Wizard* offices. By Garth Ennis and John McCrea. **$2.25 EACH MR**

HELLBOY: WAKE THE DEVIL #4

HITMAN #7

## IMPULSE #19

**DC COMICS** Bart's life as Impulse might be fast and furious, but you ain't seen nuthin' till you've been *inside* his head. That's right, it's time to play Sandman! Catch a glimpse of what speeds through Bart's mind when he's asleep. Just be sure to buckle your seatbelts and keep you head and arms inside his ears at all times. By Mark Waid, Tom Peyer, Humberto Ramos and Wayne Faucher. **$1.75**

## IRON MAN #1

**MARVEL** Y'know...the best thing about "Heroes Reborn" is that it wipes out that whole "Iron Man is 16 years old" crap.

## WHAT I'M READING

**name:** **Amanda Conner**

**occupation:** **Penciler of *Vampirella: Death and Destruction***

**currently reads:**

"I'm reading directions to a lot of new things that I'm buying for my apartment. [*Laughs*] The first one I usually go for would be *Sin City*. Frank Miller is just about my favorite writer. I just started reading *Preacher*. Everybody was ranting and raving about it so I picked up the graphic novel and have been reading that. It's really good. I love the *22 Brides* thing that just came out. *Bone*, although I missed a bunch of them. *Strangers in Paradise* and *Martha Washington* stuff, whenever it comes out. There's a bunch of other stuff that I'm probably forgetting. And *Vampirella*, of course."

# MORE PICKS

Whoever came up with that idea should be ashamed of themselves. Anyhoo...this first ish introduces you to the new Shellhead, his new facial hair, his hot assistant Liz Ross and that Bruce Banner fella. By Jim Lee, Scott Lobdell, Whilce Portacio and Scott Williams. **$2.95**

## JUSTICE LEAGUE: A MIDSUMMER'S NIGHTMARE #3 (OF 3)

**DC COMICS** If everyone in the world had unlimited power it would be total chaos...and it is. Can the power of the JLA beat the combined power of the Know-Man and the reality-altering Dr. Destiny? By Mark Waid, Fabian Nicieza, Jeff Johnson, Darrick Robertson, Jon Holdredge and Anibal Rodriguez. **$2.95**

## LEAVE IT TO CHANCE #1

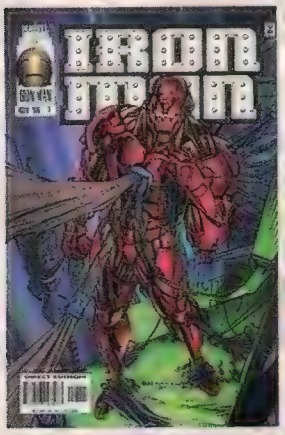
**HOMAGE COMICS** Most kids don't want to be like their dads, because...well...dads just ain't cool. They go around dressed in plaid shirts and lime-green shorts. But if your dad's the protector of a city full of monsters, ghosts and everything else supernatural, you'd be dying to follow in his footsteps. (Well, as long as you weren't a wuss.) And that's just what a young girl named Chance does, although it might prove fatal for her. By James Robinson and Paul Smith. **$2.50**

## LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #86

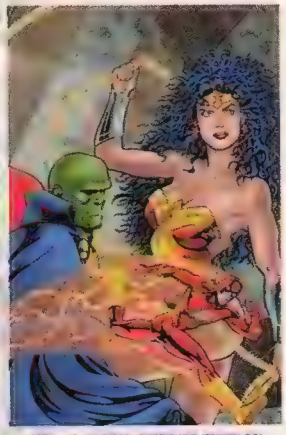
**DC COMICS** With no other hope in sight to save Earth, one of the Legionnaires makes a last ditch effort to restart the sun. Will the Legion be mourning another member or will they all perish when the world dies anyway? And while in the midst of death, a romance begins between two other Legionnaires. Woo-woo! By Tom Peyer, Tom McCraw, Lee Moder and Ron Boyd. **$2.25**

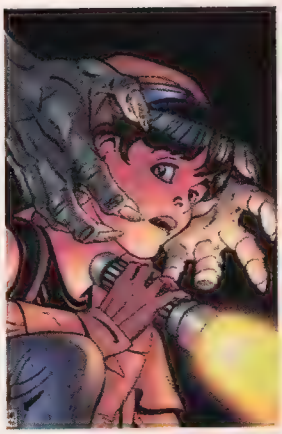
## LEGIONNAIRES #42

**DC COMICS** The Emerald Eye has caused more trouble than it was worth, but it's still got more havoc to wreak. (Sidenote: Don't you hate that evil channel on cable where every time you turn it on they're doing some disgusting eye operation with nerves, blood, mucus and gunk flying everywhere? What kind of people watch that?) Anyways, Mysa, that crazy old lady, wants the Eye for herself, but Kinetix isn't about to let it go that easily. You know what that means...Fight! Fight! By Roger Stern, Tom McCraw, Jeffrey Moy and W.C. Carani **$2.25**



IRON MAN #1


JL: A MIDSUMMER'S NIGHTMARE #3


LEAVE IT TO CHANCE #1

PARALLAX: EMERALD NIGHT #1

## MONKEYMAN AND O'BRIEN #3

**LEGEND/DARK HORSE** The second coolest thing about this comic? It's got a giant talking monkey in it. The coolest thing: Art Adams art. Adams. Art. Adams. Art. Adams. We could keep this up all day. Anyways, in an effort to find Monkeyman's real home, the big ol' ape and O'Brien jump into the Terminus, a link to all dimensions. The only problem is that it's guarded by Quash, a giant armored insectoid. By Arthur Adams. **$2.95**

## PARALLAX: EMERALD NIGHT #1

**DC COMICS** Hal Jordan (a.k.a. Parallax) is back and he's out for revenge. (Gee, that's something new.) He and the Cyborg (who's died like, what, 20 times already?) are gonna go at it for the final time. We'll also see how Hal deals with Earth being slowly frozen. He went nuts when Coast City was destroyed—how's he gonna act when the entire Earth's gone? By Ron Marz, Mike McKone and Mark McKenna. Marz says, "The whole issue is about Hal undergoing a self-examination to understand what happened to him and why he became Parallax. We'll see Kyle in it and a lot of the various people that were important in Hal's life: Carol Ferris, Pie-face, Guy Gardner, John Stewart and even a Guardian." **$2.95**

## PREACHER #19

**VERTIGO/DC** "Crusaders," Part 1 (of 6). Still thinking they have Jesse Custer, The Grail takes Cassidy the Vampire to a lab, ready to dissect him and find out what makes him tick. (Never mess with a ticking vampire.) Meanwhile, Jesse and Tulip jet off to France to look for Cassidy. Unfortunately, the Saint of Killers is still hot on their trail, and he's one ornery punk. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **$2.50 MR**

# MORE PICKS

## PREACHER SPECIAL: SAINT OF KILLERS #4 (OF 4)

**VERTIGO/DC** In the conclusion to the Saint's origin, we'll see him make his way out of Hell and back to Texas where he'll put his new skills to good use—death and destruction. He's got a lot of vengeance to pass around—so quit shovin', there's plenty for everyone. Good family fun by Garth Ennis and Steve Pugh. **$2.50 MR**

## ROBIN #35

**DC COMICS** Yep, that ol' DC Universe sun is still out, so Robin and the Spoiler team up to stop some criminals on a terror spree. Hey, if we were Robin, we'd get Spoiler plastered and pull the old "Y'know, this could be our last night together..." trick. By Chuck Dixon, Staz Johnson and Bob Smith. **$1.95**

## SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #44

**VERTIGO/DC** "Phantom of the Fair," Part 4 (of 4). It's the big finale. Huzzah! The World's Fair victims are piling up, but things get real personal when a friend of Wesley Dodds makes the list. So when the Sandman finally figures out who the killer is, look out! By Matt Wagner, Steven T. Seagle and Guy Davis. **$2.50 MR**

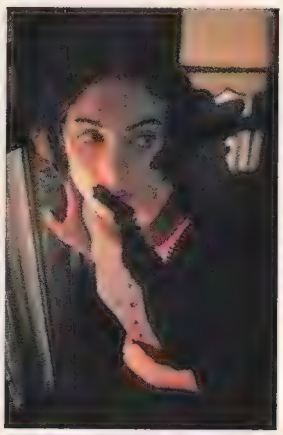
## STARMAN #24

**DC COMICS** "Hellquest," Part 1 (of 3). The O'Dares seek out Starman's help in freeing their son and the Shade from a mystical trap. Plus, Jack Knight gives the Mist a moment of happiness by impersonating the villain's dead son. By James Robinson, Tony Harris, Chris Sprouse and Wade Von Grawbadger. **$2.25**

## UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN #15

**MARVEL** Betty Brant's guido boyfriend, Gordon, thinks he's tough—so tough that he plans on taking control of the *Bugle* and taking out Spidey in one fell swoop. Hey...I'd pay 99 cents to see somebody pound a guido unconscious. By Kurt Busiek, Pat Olliffe and Al Vey. **99 CENTS** W

PREACHER #19



SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #44

# AT A GLANCE!

### A listing of the high-profile books shipping in September

**Action Comics #727 (DC)** With the sun gone and the SimmBots back in town, it's up to Supes and the SCU to help. **$1.95**

**Adventures of Superman #540 (DC)** While Ferro's unfortunate past is revealed, a major blizzard drops itself on Metropolis. **$1.95**

**Amazing Spider-Man #417 (Marvel)** The secrets behind Judas Traveller and Scrier are finally brought to light. The clone saga is ending. Somebody at Marvel woke up. **$1.50**

**Cable #37 (Marvel)** Cable beat the techno-virus, but now he's gotta deal with a new threat—a man called Garrison Kane. **$1.95**

**Curse of the Spawn #1 (Image)** 1,000 years in the future, will the new Spawn save the world or will he become it's master? **$1.95**

**Deathblow/Wolverine #2 (WildStorm)** Cray and Logan fight their way toward the Triad, an ancient group possessing the people of San Francisco. **$2.50**

**DV8 #2 (WildStorm)** The team sets out to discover if a gang of serial killers in California are gen-active. **$2.50**

**Elektra #1 (Marvel)** It's the launch of the new "old version" Elektra, which means she won't be Miss Nice Girl anymore. **$1.95**

**Generation X #21 (Marvel)** Howard the Duck guest stars as he, Skin and Chamber go in search of Howard's love, Beverly Switzer. **$1.95**

**Magneto #1 (Marvel)** The X-Men must decide what's better for Magneto—leaving him be, or revealing his true past. **$1.95**

**Sensational Spider-Man #10 (Marvel)** Swarm is back and he's ready to take over New York, but Spidey's got other plans. **$2.95**

**Spawn #54 (Image)** Spawn and Terry Fitzgerald form an alliance to take down Jason Wynn. **$1.95**

**Spectacular Spider-Man #240 (Marvel)** Seward Trainer's looking for Spidey, ready to tell all he knows about the entire clone mess. **$1.50**

**Spider-Man #74 (Marvel)** Spidey and Daredevil team up to bring down Fortunato and his underworld mob. **$1.95**

**Superman #117 (DC Comics)** Supes must fight the very robots he created to guard his Fortress of Solitude. **$1.95**

**Superman: The Man of Steel #62 (DC Comics)** Will Supes share his father's fate as the Earth dies and the Man of Steel slowly loses his powers? **$1.95**

**Uncanny X-Men #338 (Marvel)** Find out how the real, flesh-and-blood, winged Angel was restored and what the Crimson Dawn did to Psylocke. **$1.95**

**Vampirella: Death & Destruction #3 (Harris)** Mistress Nyx and Vampi face off in a battle to the death. And you won't believe who wins! **$2.95**

**The X-Files #22 (Topps)** Scully and Mulder race to Hawaii to find out why a group of students seem to be dying from fear. **$2.95**

**The X-Files: Season One #3 (Topps)** When a UFO-abduction case catches his attention, Mulder tells the tale of his sister's disappearance. **$3.95**

**X-Man #21 (Marvel)** Just when Nate thinks things are going well, he's attacked by Selene and Madelyne. **$1.95**

**X-Men #58 (Marvel)** While Gambit and Magneto battle amongst themselves, Scott and Jean go in search of a new mansion. **$1.95**

**X-Men: The Rise of Apocalypse #2 (Marvel)** See how Apocalypse was transformed by travelers from the future into the villain that's such a pain in the X-Men's collective ass. **$1.95**

Fleer/Skybox International Presents...

# The Caught in the Onslaught Contest

MARVEL ONSLAUGHT ULTRA

## The Marvel Comics crossover

extravaganza of Onslaught has been captured on trading cards by Fleer/SkyBox International! With great drawings from artists like Adam and Andy Kubert, special subsets by "Heroes Reborn" creators Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld and more. *OverPower* chase card goodies than you can shake a stick at. This is sure to be the comic card release of the year! And if you get caught in the Onslaught, you could win it all!

## How to Play

It's a breeze. Just fill out the entry form and think warm, happy thoughts about Fleer/SkyBox. Randomly selected contestants will win...

## ...These Great Prizes!

**Grand Prize 1:** One reader will receive a complete set of *Marvel Ultra Onslaught* cards. And when we say complete, we mean it! You'll get the 100 base cards, 4 *OverPower* bonus cards, 7 PowerBlast *OverPower* Mission cards and 2 Lenticular cards. And, as a special added bonus, all Jim Lee- or Rob Liefeld drawn cards in the base 100 card set will be autographed by Lee or Liefeld!

**Runner-Up 15:** Fifteen readers will receive a display box of the *Marvel Ultra Onslaught* trading cards! Just think, 36 packages of Onslaught goodness to play with! Oooooh!

**This contest is sponsored by Fleer/Skybox International, and we think they're real swell.**

## The Legalese

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Fleer/SkyBox International and their immediate families or that no-good shiny-melloned Charles Xavier. Never trust anybody who "does it" with aliens. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Caught in the Onslaught Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Maybe it's us, but we think Onslaught is really one of them evil spider/crab critters from the Dark Crystal. Never trust evil muppets! **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by October 31, 1996.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected by random drawing from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press. Drawing will take place on November 15, 1996.

For a list of winners, available after November 15, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Caught in the Onslaught Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Fleer SkyBox International

**Fill this sucker out, put it in an envelope and send it to: Caught in the Onslaught Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Deadline is October 31, 1996, 1996–so get yer ya-ya's out!**

## Onslaught Entry Form

**DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 31, 1996!**

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

Barbecue sauce or honey mustard? _____

# DRAWING BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the show for **Wizard Readers' Art**

The four creative folks whose artwork got an honorable mention this month will each receive a *Superman: The Man of Steel* #57 signed by Roger Stern and a *Evil Ernie: Straight to Hell* #1 signed by J.R. Justiniano. Each of the three talented runners-up scores a *Green Arrow* #110 signed by Chuck Dixon, a *Spectacular Spider-Man* #213 signed by Ann Nocenti and a *Fantastic Four 2099* #1 signed by Rick Leonardi. The Grand Prize winner comes away with all those goodies plus a piece of original Captain Marvel art by Jerry Ordway—thanks a bunch, Jerry! Congrats to all artists!

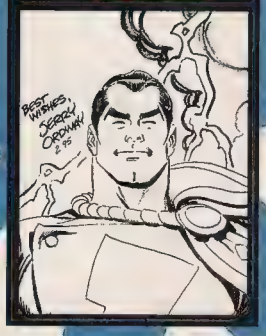
## GRAND PRIZE

**JOHN CONSTANTINE** **Gill Sanchez** Doylestown, PA

THE ARTIST

GILL SANCHEZ

THE BOOTY



## RUNNERS-UP

**MORPHEUS, MATTHEW & HELM Darrell Campos** Moreno Valley, CA

**SILVER SURFER & GALACTUS Mark Nagata** San Francisco, CA

**JUDGE GIRL Jonathan H.M.** Jakarta, Indonesia

# HONORABLE MENTIONS

**LOBO**
**G. Patrick Teran**
Bogota, NJ

**SAVAGE DRAGON VS. THE TURTLES**
**Sean Stevens**
Monroe, MI

**TASMANIAN BEAST**
**Martin Lopez G.**
Mexico, D.F.

**ROBIN**
**Eric Benroth**
Tooele, UT

Want your art to appear on one of these three pages in future issues? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your Drawing Board entries to:

Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Entries can be e-mailed to WizardTGTC@aol.com (please use an EPS or TIFF format @ 300 dpi).

And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. If you do not write your full name, address and telephone number on the back of your entry, it will be disqualified. All entries are nonreturnable and become the property of Wizard Press. Employees of Wizard Press are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? Good luck!

The Creators of

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a look at some cool stuff with an alternative twist

# Seth's Good Life

## Canadian creator Seth is moving from autobiography to fiction in his *Palooka-Ville*

The comic book art of *Palooka-Ville* creator and Toronto resident Seth (just Seth) is a paradox. He draws with a simple and elegant line, often delineating a panel in a few perfectly placed brushstrokes, but he uses his pictures to tell very complex stories. Seth's art style is inspired mostly by one-panel gag cartoonists of the '30s and '40s like Peter Arno and William Steig, yet the Canadian cartoonist tells extended real-life stories that have no punchline at all. While the effect of all these paradoxical elements might seem jarring on the surface, in reality it gives Seth's comics a sense of calmness and melancholy—his brush lines reflect the fading wisps of memory and nostalgia without being shallow or sappy.

Seth, who got his start in comics drawing *Mister X* at Vortex and currently moonlights as a magazine illustrator, admits that he owes a debt to the work of cartoonists from *The New Yorker* and other magazines. "I grew up with a wide variety of cartooning, but I didn't really discover the gag cartoonists until I was in my middle 20s," he recalls. "I think it's purely an aesthetic thing. I find the drawing styles of these cartoonists extremely appealing to me. The stylization, the simplicity—it's very appealing."

His obsession with cartoonists from the heyday of *The New Yorker* inspired the story "It's a Good Life, If You Don't Weaken," which ran in *Palooka-Ville* #4-#9 and will be released as a two-color book in September. In this autobiographical story, Seth stumbles upon the work of an obscure *New Yorker* cartoonist named Kalo and becomes determined to discover more about his life and work. The story also reflects Seth's attempts to deal with his own life and past memories in the form of laid-back soliloquies.

Unfortunately, many readers make assumptions about autobiographical cartoonists like Seth without actually reading their work. Unlike others who use autobiography as an excuse to let everybody know how miserable their lives are, Seth uses it as a springboard to create a story. "I'm trying to compose a comic where the story is the main focus of it, and not myself," he explains. "I'm looking at it as if I'm writing a short story, where it's important that you think about the demands of the story. It needs a beginning, middle and an end, and some thematic unity. You're trying to say something as opposed to just composing a story that only says, 'Here's something that happened to me that's interesting.' For the most part, autobiography in comics has just been aimed to get a cheap reaction out of the audience."

According to Seth, autobiographical comics have also suffered because too many cartoonists see them as a way of making a name for themselves. "I haven't been too impressed with autobiography on the whole," Seth acknowledges. "I think it unfortunately became too much of a genre. It's something that shouldn't be a genre. Nobody thinks of autobiography in literature as a genre; it's just somebody writing about their own life. In comics it took on an uncomfortable quality of a bandwagon that everyone was jumping on. I think that sort of killed it. People started to see it as a trend as opposed to a simple fact of people writing about their own lives."

Seth will hopefully distance himself from these preconceived notions with the next story serialized in *Palooka-Ville*, tentatively titled "Boyd Fans." This story will be a fictionalized tale centering on different time periods within the lives of two brothers who sell electric fans. "It sounds kind of boring on the surface, but of course the story deals mostly with their interior lives," says Seth.

This new story has required some research into the specifics of salesmanship, but Seth is excited to take a break from autobiography.

At left: Seth gets introspective in his hotel room
Below: Cover art from *Palooka-Ville* #8

by tom palmer jr.

Seth himself from *Palooka-Ville* #9

"Being forced to deal with yourself as the main character all the time is difficult, and I think it is a natural progression to move from autobiography into fiction at some point. For me, it just feels like the right time to do it. I don't want to deal with myself as the main character anymore, but I still want to deal with things in a real-life setting. The natural solution seems to be turning to fiction."

Now that he's started working on his new story, Seth has realized that there are very few differences between autobiography and fiction. "Even though my earlier work was based on my life, you're fictionalizing anyway with autobiography. Your life really doesn't work as a series of scenes, but when you do a comic based on your life, you're picking key scenes and you're stringing them together into a very artificial structure compared to what life is really like. It's sort of the same process when you're writing a fictionalized story. You choose what the important moments in the story are and start working around them, figuring out what scenes fit and what's important to establish a certain kind of mood, what kind of character this person would be, and what you're going to emphasize."

But regardless of whether he's writing about himself or about two fictional brothers, the important thing to Seth is that he has a forum to tell a good story. "I'm more interested in telling stories than I am in drawing," he admits. "The drawing just serves the purpose of telling the story. I have a deep love of comics from growing up with them. Somewhere along the line it just got absorbed into my system. I didn't give any real thought as to why I'm doing comics; it just seemed natural, since I've always loved them. At this point, it's the storytelling that's interesting to me, the idea of communicating a story to the audience. It just seems natural that comics would be the way to go. It's satisfying, it's a nice, direct method because you can do it all on your own, and it's such a natural outgrowth of the interest I grew up with." W

*Tom Palmer Jr. is happy he doesn't have to sell electric fans to make a living. That would just blow (ba-dum-bump).*

**FYI**

*Palooka-Ville* is published by the nice folks at Drawn & Quarterly Publications. You can get a sample issue for $2.95 or a four-issue subscription for $8.95 if you write to them at Drawn & Quarterly Publications, 5550 Jeanne-Mance St. #16, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2V 4K6. *It's a Good Life, If You Don't Weaken*, a book collecting the story serialized in *Palooka-Ville* #4-#9, will be released in September in a $12.95 softcover, as well as a $29.95 signed hardcover. *Palooka-Ville* #10, which kicks off the new storyline, is slated for sometime after that, in late '96.

## Seth's Recommended Reading

"I'll always plug anything Joe Sacco is doing. He finished *Palestine*, and now he's moving on to a new story about Bosnia, which I'm sure will be good. I love what Dan Clowes is doing with *Eightball*, as well as Chris Ware's *Acme Novelty Library*, Chester Brown's *Underwater*, Adrian Tomine's *Optic Nerve* and Joe Matt's *Peep Show*—and I'm looking forward to checking out Gilbert Hernandez's *New Love*. I'm also enjoying Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's *From Hell*, in addition to *Adolf* by Osamu Tezuka. I also enjoy many old comics. Right now I'm reading *Kookie*, *Dunk*, *Loo* and *Thirteen Going on Eighteen*. These are teenage comics from the early '60s by Little Lulu creator John Stanley; they're not high art, but they're fun and well crafted."

## Recommended Reading

•***Bratpack/Maximortal Super Special*** After an almost three-year hiatus, Rick Veitch finally returns to his "King Hell Heroica," a five-cycle examination of "the superhero archtype." Just when you thought superheroes were old news, Veitch is back to bring his twisted ideas to the genre. If you've read Veitch's superhero comics before, you know what to expect: solid storytelling and a wry sense of humor and satire. The black-and-white *Bratpack/Maximortal Super Special* (right) will be out in September, followed by a black-and-white trade paperback reprinting the original *Maximortal* series in October. Both of these will lead directly into a new bimonthly *Maximortal* series tentatively set to begin in November. Meanwhile, Veitch's innovative dream stories in *Rare Bit Fiends* will continue on a bimonthly basis. For more information, you can contact King Hell Press at PO Box 1371, West Townshend, VT 05359-1371.

•***Tongue*Lash*** This is one strange comic. But it also happens to be engagingly written by the team of Randy and Jean-Marc Lofficier (best known for their work in bringing artist Moebius' work to an American audience) and beautifully drawn by Dave Taylor. Described as a "Mayan bondage sci-fi thriller," *Tongue*Lash* follows two private investigators who are framed for a murder and discover a conspiracy that could cause their entire society to crumble. Taylor is known for his work on DC's *Shadow of the Bat*, but his European-flavored art on *Tongue*Lash* reveals that his work is capable of capturing the exotic demands of the Lofficiers' story. The first full-color issue of *Tongue*Lash* came out from Dark Horse in August, and the conclusion is set for September release, so you should be able to find both of them at your local comic store.

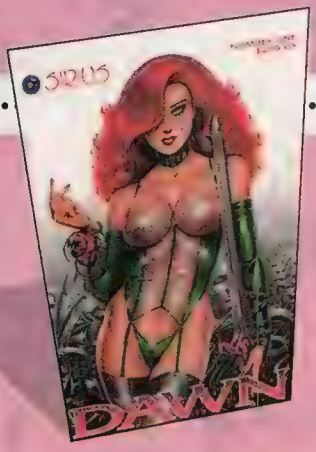
***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. Here are August's hottest back issues.**

# TOP 10 COMICS

## 1. PREACHER #1

WRITER: Garth Ennis ARTIST: Steve Dillon

Whatever happened to Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggert and Jerry Falwell? You just don't see them on the telly anymore. Now, those were some preachers that could live lives of debauchery and still get up early on Sunday mornings. Another guy you won't see faith-healing and weeping on Sunday morn is the Reverend Jesse Custer. That's because he's on the run from a gunslingin' saint and Texas lawmen, all the while looking for God, who's abandoned his kingdom. Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon prove once again that religion can be fun, if not dangerous. But we think you'll agree, conspiring with vampires and gun-totin' mamas is still not as dangerous as swapping fluids with Jessica Hahn.




## 2. DAWN #1

WRITER: Joseph Michael Linsner ARTIST: Joseph Michael Linsner

Everybody loves a redhead. You've got Wilma Flintstone, Tina Louise, Lucille Ball's corpse, Mary Jane Parker, Cheryl Blossom, Red Sonja and of course, our favorite, Dawn. Fanboys just can't get enough of this scarlet-tressed beauty. Just try finding a copy of *Dawn* #1 and see if you get anything but pain and aggravation. And while fans seem to dig the stories, go nuts over Linsner's art and go ga-ga over Dawn, the lingerie helps too, though it's doubtful that Lucille Ball's corpse in a two-piece would have the same effect.

## 3. WOLVERINE #100

WRITER: Larry Hama

ARTISTS: Adam Kubert and Dan Green

Y'think those fancy schmancy claws of Wolverine's ever just pop out by accident? Y'know, like when he's out on a date and puttin' the moves on some minor or when he's in the crapper proving that he indeed is the best he is at what he does, suddenly, "Snikt"—party's over. Either way, he is still Marvel's most popular character. This ish is ridin' high on the charts, as it returns Wolverine to his more angry, "look at me funny and I'll give you a third colon" state (Minus his nose. Don't ask.).

**NUMBER THREE**

**NUMBER FOUR**

## 4. WITCHBLADE #1

WRITERS: David Wohl and Brian Haberlin

ARTISTS: Michael Turner and D-Tron

Who's the coolest cop this side of Starsky and Hutch? Who's more deadly than Mr. Blonde in "Reservoir Dogs"? Why, it's Sara Pezzini, with that groovy Witchblade gauntlet on her right hand. She's another slash-and-gash specialist out to right wrongs, fight injustice and wear skintight, itty-bitty, skimpy dresses. Hey, you gotta admire her audacity. Wohl, Haberlin and Turner make *Witchblade* one of the most aesthetically pleasing Bad Girl comics out there. However, there is one thing that could make this title better. Two words…Huggy Bear.

NUMBER FIVE

## 5. THE X-FILES #1

WRITER: Stefan Petrucha
ARTIST: Charles Adlard

Speaking of Starsky and Hutch, it seems like there is nothing cooler than a couple of hard-working schmucks struggling against impossible odds just to get through the day. Where would the world be without the likes of Shari Lewis and Lambchop, Sigfried and Roy and FBI agents extraordinaire Scully and Mulder? (Note: We just lied. Scully and Mulder aren't "agents extraordinaire." They never solve anything. Mulder always gets slapped around and Scully never gets naked.) Regardless of ineptitude, *The X-Files* #1 is still selling faster than fake sideburns at an Elvis convention.

## 6. KINGDOM COME #1

WRITER: Mark Waid
ARTIST: Alex Ross

Superman could have nailed Wonder Woman. All throughout the first few *Kingdom Comes*, Diana kept giving Supes the ol' "let's swap spit" look, but Supes didn't take the bait. He *was* spending a lot of time with Comet the Superhorse, though.... Anyhoo, with Mark Waid and Alex Ross providing the words and pictures for this grim, violent look into the DC Universe of tomorrow, fans went monkey-nuts over this series. Neat story, great dialogue, art that belongs in a museum...this series has it all.

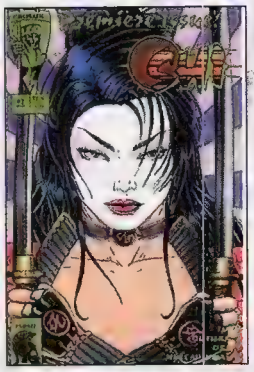
NUMBER SIX

NUMBER SEVEN

## 7. DC VERSUS MARVEL #1

WRITER: Ron Marz
ARTISTS: D. Jurgens, J. Rubinstein, C. Castellini and P. Neary

We're sticking by our guns that the whole DC vs. Marvel thing was a letdown (Batman beats Cap? Wolvie squashes Lobo? Two-panel fights? Feh!). Even so, it was pretty cool to see, however briefly, stuff like Shazam vs. Dr. Doom, Superman vs. Juggernaut, Punisher vs. Deathstroke...stuff like that. And while many fans felt the same as us, the sheer coolness of having those characters bump into one another was enough to make the whole thing worthwhile. Let's just hope that October's DC/Marvel sequel, *All Access*, learns from this series' mistakes.



NUMBER EIGHT

## 8. SHI #1

WRITERS: William Tucci and Peter Gutierrez
ARTISTS: William Tucci and Barry Orkin

Y'know, you'd think these latter-day samurai warrior types would wear a little more armor and a little less white clown make-up. Otherwise, Shi is looking just fine. This *sohei* warrior has what it takes to fight crime in the Big Apple and still have time to work as the refined Ana Ishikawa, art gallery curator. Big, bad Billy Tucci provides not only great art for *Shi*, but also gives a fresh perspective on Eastern philosophy melded with Western culture. It's kind of like downing some sushi with a Coke, except you don't get the fish burps after reading this particular issue.

## 9. HITMAN #1

WRITER: Garth Ennis
ARTIST: John McCrea

Remember Terrorsmith, Myriad and Lionheart? Of course you don't. That's because these are some of the lame and forgettable characters who came out of the "Bloodlines" storyline that ran through the DC annuals in 1993. However, lame and forgettable isn't how you would describe Garth Ennis' Hitman. He is the only 1993 DC annual alumnus that is an irrefutable success. Having telepathic abilities and X-ray vision makes Hitman not only a good assassin, but one heckuva poker player. Throw in excellent storylines and uproarious dialogue and BAM!, you've got one of the most underrated comics going.

NUMBER NINE

## 10. THE X-FILES #2

WRITER: Stefan Petrucha
ARTIST: Charles Adlard

Jinkies! Did Mulder just fill a squirrel monkey with sour cream via a caulking gun or was it just a bad drug trip? Did Scully just see aliens come down and take a redneck's temperature with a baton, and then dismiss the whole thing as a light reflection off the windshield? Who knows, and who cares? The only truth we're sure of is that Topps has a bonafide hit with its flagship *X-Files* title, combining Charles Adlard's *noir* art style, Stefan Petrucha's conspiracy-laden tales and the drooling six jillion *X-Files* fans who just can't get enough of the show.

NUMBER TEN

# THE NEXT TEN

THE NEXT 10 HOT BOOKS AND THE COMPANIES THAT MAKE THEM

11. GEN[13] #1 (REG. SERIES) IMAGE
12. PREACHER #2 DC
13. ANGELA #1 IMAGE
14. X-MEN: ONSLAUGHT #1 MARVEL
15. LADY DEATH #1 (MINI-SERIES) CHAOS!
16. LADY DEATH: THE ODYSSEY #1 CHAOS!
17. SPAWN #9 IMAGE
18. SHI #2 CRUSADE
19. DETECTIVE COMICS #700 DC
20. LADY DEATH: B.H.A.H. #1 CHAOS!

by Jon Warren

# ONSLAUGHT AFTERMATH!

We warned you that big changes were coming in the Marvel Universe, and now they are here! This world will be leaner, meaner and really, really hot! If you don't have all the Onslaught titles in which these changes are happening, now's the time to get them. And don't stop buying now—the fun's just beginning!

## PRICES REBORN

Now that "Onslaught" is wrapping up, we are getting our first look at Rob Liefeld and Jim Lee's "Heroes Reborn" revamp of the *Captain America*, *Fantastic Four*, *Iron Man* and *Avengers* titles, as well as a host of other Marvel characters, heroes and villains alike. Don't be surprised if back issues of these four original series stir up interest among collectors. Keep your eyes peeled for this quartet, as new demand for their early issues might drive prices up.

*X-Men* #54 is just one of the many major Onslaught issues

## LISTEN TO THE PREACHER

As interest in the rare early issues of this title grows, the debate about which book is Jesse Custer's first appearance grows with it. After lengthy research and discussion with all parties involved, we've determined that *Preacher* #1 is the official first appearance of the Preacher cast, and not *Absolute Vertigo*, as many believe. *Absolute Vertigo* is widely considered to be merely a reprinting of a few pages of *Preacher* #1, which is regarded as the original source material (even though *Absolute* came out a few weeks prior to *Preacher* #1). That's the way we'll be listing it, and pricing it, in the Price Guide from now on.

Incidentally, we've been fielding questions about another potential *Preacher* first appearance: a black-and-white mini-pre-

## The Quick List — What's Hot in the Comic Book Market

• DAWN—Joe Linsner's sad-faced siren remains our most popular femme fatale, despite a general slump in "Bad Girl" titles overall. We suspect it's a combination of Joe's skillful art and the bizarre stories which accompany each appearance of the mysterious Dawn—and not just the lady's obvious charms—that keeps readers coming back and draws new ones in.

• FATALE—Fans are starting to take notice of this action-adventure heroine, and as always, that means back issue prices go up. Try a new issue, but don't wait too long to pick up the early issues.

• FLASH—The recent trade paperback *The Return of Barry Allen* has sparked interest in Silver Age Flash stories, many of which can still be purchased for more-than-reasonable prices, even the Carmine Infantino issues.

• JUSTICE LEAGUE: A MIDSUMMER'S NIGHTMARE—All of your favorite heroes together in one comic! Fans have really responded by making this one of the hottest titles of the summer.

• KINGDOM COME—This Mark Waid/Alex Ross epic more than met fans' expectations. Even though graphic novel collections of the story will be on the way soon, the individual issues are still super-collectible, if for no other reason than those beautiful wraparound covers. (Wouldn't you like a key identifying each of the featured characters?)

• LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES/LEGIONNAIRES—While solid mid-range sellers, back issues are hard to find. The Legion books offer strong storytelling that doesn't forget to add some fun to the excitement. Try 'em and you'll be hooked.

• ONSLAUGHT—The final fate of Charles Xavier and his no-longer-so-merry mutants has been revealed, but fans still recognize there's going to be a lot of fun watching everyone try to pick up the pieces.

• OZ—If you grew up watching the MGM movie, you probably won't recognize Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion as they appear in this series. It's adult action, war, drama, superheroics, human heroics and Oz-mania, all rolled into one. And it's super-hot and super-rare. One retailer said issue #2 is the hardest comic book to find he's ever seen, period.

• PREACHER—These issues are still moving briskly and seem poised to fill the Vertigo void left over by *The Sandman*.

• ROSWELL: LITTLE GREEN MAN!—Consistently entertaining, this Martian man has proved himself to be the most popular new character to emerge from Bongo Comics.

## WIZARD'S TOP 10 HOTTEST WRITERS

1. **Garth Ennis** — *Preacher, Hitman*
2. **Mark Waid** — *Kingdom Come, Flash*
3. **Peter David** — *Hulk, Aquaman*
4. **Neil Gaiman** — *Sandman*
5. **Karl Kesel** — *Daredevil*
6. **Scott Lobdell** — *Generation X, Uncanny X-Men*
7. **Kurt Busiek** — *Astro City*
8. **Ron Marz** — *Green Lantern*
9. **James Robinson** — *Starman*
10. **Terry Moore** — *Strangers in Paradise*

## WIZARD'S TOP 10 HOTTEST ARTISTS

1. **Todd McFarlane** — *Spawn*
2. **Jim Lee** — *upcoming: Fantastic Four*
3. **Joe Madureira** — *Uncanny X-Men*
4. **Alex Ross** — *Kingdom Come*
5. **J. Scott Campbell** — *Gen13*
6. **Billy Tucci** — *Shi*
7. **Joe Linsner** — *Dawn*
8. **Joe Quesada** — *Ash*
9. **Adam Kubert** — *Wolverine*
10. **Andy Kubert** — *X-Men*

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS AND ARTISTS LISTS ARE DERIVED FROM A NATIONWIDE RETAILER SURVEY.

## WIZARD'S UP & COMING CREATOR

### JOHN McCREA

On top of his ability to create intense mood in a scene, artist John McCrea embellishes *Hitman* with relentless, suspenseful pacing, and a dense, almost ghostly *film noir* look. He also frequently makes horrific scenes hilarious, adding to the book's non-stop fun. *Hitman* editor Dan Raspler says, "He has a style all his own, with his seamless blend of drawing and photo reference, his incredibly powerful use of blacks in his pages and his dynamic sense of storytelling. He gives a natural, believable reality to these mythic urban characters."

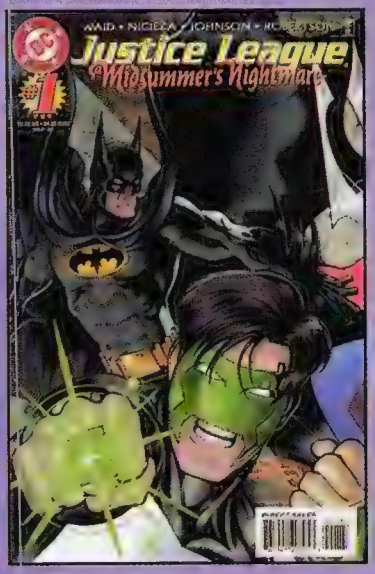
view of *Preacher* #1, which was a freebie given out to fans by retailers. The preview predated *Absolute* by a few weeks, but no, this is still not considered a first appearance. Nice try, but not quite.

## NEW ACCESS TO AMALGAM?

You may believe it to be dead, destroyed when the Marvel and DC universes returned to normal. But fans of the Amalgam Universe should keep their eyes peeled for DC Comics' upcoming *All Access* mini-series due out in October, where this universe could see the light of day once again. No one is saying whether or not Amalgam characters like Dark Claw, Super-Soldier or X-Patrol will pop up, but one never knows…

## A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN

The success of DC's *Justice League: A Midsummer's Nightmare* mini-series proved once again that fans can't resist the lure of a good story featuring terrific art and




a l of a company's big guns. It worked in 1959, it works in 1996—retailers are reporting sellouts of the first couple of issues! With this title, DC started yet another new direction for the JLA, and we hope that they will stick with this "all-star" concept for good. (Hey, Marvel—you listenin' for your *Avengers* relaunch?)

## TAKEN BY FORCE

Star Wars comics are hotter'n ever! We're not quite sure what it is—maybe the ongoing series of best-selling prose novels, or the prospect of seeing a retouched "Star Wars"

# MARKET WATCHERS

## Letters to the Price Guide

**Q: If price guides are based on what people are paying for books, and dealers price based on price guides, then how do prices change? If *Amazing Spider-Dude* #1 is $10 in your guide, then every dealer is going to charge me $10. Couldn't you make my copy of *The Huntress* #1 worth $1,000,000 just by pricing it like that in your guide? If so, please do, because I bought two copies of it.**
**James Lancaster**
**Florence, KY**

A: James, retailers don't always charge based on price guides. They use many methods to price back issues: availability, condition, rarity of the issue, what other retailers charge, the *Wizard* price guide quotes, and so on. Mostly they know their customers and their market, and price accordingly. The *Wizard* price guide is for *collectors*, so they can bargain for books they want to buy or sell and accurately place a value on their collections. The *Wizard* guide reflects prices actually paid for books, not what retailers—or *collectors*—are asking. And hey, if we *could* control prices, forget *Huntress*, we'd have a billion-dollar New Universe collection!

**Q: A few years ago, after *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, DC published a hardcover version of *The History of the DC Universe*, with a poster and a pin. I've yet to find anyone else who has one of these. I recently had the poster professionally framed and have received a large number of compliments on it. I wonder if you could give me an idea of what it's worth.**
**Christopher Onlso**
**Brownsville, TX**

A: The hardcover book is tough to find, but not much in demand. It is a limited edition, though, so there's no telling how much it might be worth in the future.

**Q: I recently acquired a copy of *Ghost Rider* #8 (the second series, from 1973) with a certificate of authenticity from the "Second Mile High Collection." The certificate states this issue is "one of the highest-quality examples of this particular issue" they have ever seen. Is it worth any more than a normal Near Mint issue?**
**David Jimenez**
**Los Angeles, CA**

A: No. Your certificate only guarantees someone's opinion as to its quality, and that's an individual call for each collector and retailer. Don't worry, though—it's not worth any less than a normal Near Mint issue, either.

**Q: I've been purchasing oversized comics that were released back in the 1970s. The titles include *Spider-Man, Fantastic Four, Incredible Hulk, Thor, Origins of Super-Villains*, etc. I've only been paying $4 apiece for them and they are fantastic. Why were they discontinued and what are they currently worth?**
**Nabila Reibsome**
**Danville, PA**

A: As we recall, those giant-size issues sold pretty well, but they came to an end because of a huge, rapid increase in paper costs (similar to the one the industry's been suffering over the past year or so). Depending on the title, guest stars, etc., you've been paying about average for them, so enjoy!

**Q: What does a *Wizard* Ace Edition of a comic book look like? I have read that these special editions are being offered as incentives to comic dealers if they order a certain quantity of *Wizard* every month.**
**Bart Tan**
**Philippines**

A: The *Wizard* Ace Editions are limited-edition reproductions of rare and popular original issues. They have an acetate wraparound cover. In order to get one of these gems, retailers must order a certain number of *Wizard* magazines from their distributor. Ask your local retailers if they have any—Ace Editions, that is.

Till next time, folks...keep writing!
—Jon Warren
#1 Coffee Shop Fan

**Got questions? Send 'em to:**
**Market Watchers**
**c/o Jon Warren**
**P. O. Box 2512**
**Chattanooga, TN 37409**
**Or send e-mail directly to the guy himself:**
**JonRWarren@aol.com**

next February, or a sudden resurgence in action figures, or possibly just good, old-fashioned art and storytelling. Not only are the new books from Dark Horse cooking, but so are the original Marvel issues, and even the newspaper strip reprints, as well! If you're not picking up these books, maybe you oughta be.

## SCOOP OF THE MONTH!

Brent Moore, of Comic Archives in Apple Valley, Minn., tells us that his shop is selling lots of reasonably priced Valiant back issues. Not surprising, seeing as how Valiant is set to relaunch this fall under the wing of former X-guy Fabian Nicieza. Tell your local retailer to dig out the Valiants and price 'em to sell! Then buy a bunch, and see what happens to 'em—and while you're waiting, you'll have some pretty good reads.

## GOLDEN AND SILVER AGE FANS!

Our polls proved that you guys are *Wizard* readers, too, so we won't be forgetting you. Retailers tell us that Golden Age Batman books are doing well, as are crime and mystery comics. Silver Age books on the move are all Superman titles—including peripheral titles, such as *Lois Lane* and *Jimmy Olsen*—early *X-Men* and *Hulk*, and of course, *Amazing Spider-Man*. Most retailers expect the overwhelming success of *Kingdom Come* to create some more interest in Silver Age DC titles, as *Kingdom Come*'s presentation of Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, *et al*, is pretty obviously based on the Silver Age versions.

## RANT TIME

Recently, a reader wrote to ask why we recommend that you "read" some books and "buy" others. Yes, we know there are probably still some speculators out there who buy comics just to make money and put them in bags unread, but we didn't think any of those kinds of clowns were *Wizard* readers. When we say "read" or "buy" a comic, the terms are interchangeable; we assume one will follow the other. Moreover, when you buy a comic, you are sending a message to retailers, distributors, editors and publishers: "I like this type of comic. Please make/carry more of them." Don't send the wrong message to them or to yourself; buy the books you actually plan—and like—to read. **W**

*Jon Warren spends his spare time learning the "Macarena." And he's getting pretty good at it!*

# WIZARD® TOP 100

X-Men #56

**The highest-ordered comic books for the month of JULY.**

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by comic book retailers across the country, the following is a listing of the highest-ordered comics for July. Check out the column on the right for an explanation of this month's standout books (listed in **boldface type**).

**1. X-Men #56 (Marvel)**

2. Uncanny X-Men #336 (Marvel)
3. **Wolverine #105 (Marvel)**
4. Spawn #52 (Image)
5. **Kingdom Come #3 (DC)**
6. Generation X #19 (Marvel)
7. X-Man #19 (Marvel)
8. **X-Force #58 (Marvel)**
9. Cable #35 (Marvel)
10. Uncanny X-Men '96 (Marvel)
11. X-Factor #126 (Marvel)
12. **Gen[13] #12 (Image)**
13. X-Men Unlimited #12 (Marvel)
14. **Amazing Spider-Man #415 (Marvel)**
15. **Spider-Man #72 (Marvel)**
16. Excalibur #101 (Marvel)
17. Incredible Hulk #445 (Marvel)
18. **Spectacular Spider-Man #238 (Marvel)**
19. X-Men vs. Brood: Days of Wrath #1 (Mar.)
20. **Backlash/Spider-Man #1 (Image)**
21. **Backlash/Spider-Man #2 (Image)**
22. Fantastic Four #416 (Marvel)
23. Avengers #402 (Marvel)
24. X-Men: Pryde & Wisdom #1 (Marvel)
25. The F. Adv.'s of Cyclops & Phoenix #4 (Mar.)
26. Youngblood/X-Force (Image)
27. Thor #502 (Marvel)
28. Witchblade #8 (Image)
29. **Supergirl #1 (DC)**
30. **Sensational Spider-Man #8 (Marvel)**
31. Batman #534 (DC)
32. Star Wars: S. of the Empire #3 (D.H.)
33. **Purgatori: The Vampires Myth #1 (Chaos!)**
34. Iron Man #332 (Marvel)
35. Detective Comics #701 (DC)
36. Spider-Man: Redemption #1 (Marvel)
37. Batman Black & White #4 (DC)
38. Uncanny Origins #1 (Marvel)
39. Shi #11 (Crusade)
40. Superman #115 (DC)
41. The X-Files #20 (Topps)
42. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #54 (DC)
43. Adventures of Superman #538 (DC)
44. Action Comics #725 (DC)
45. S. Wars: T. of the J.—G. A. . . Sith #0 (D.H.)
46. Superman: The Man of Steel #60 (DC)
47. Robin #33 (DC)
48. **The X-Files: Season One #1 (Topps)**
49. Manga Shi: Shiseiji #1 (Crusade)
50. Batman/Grendel II: Devil's Dance #2 (D.H.)
51. Batman: Leg. of the Dark Knight #86 (DC)
52. Sin City: That Yellow Bastard #6 (D.H.)
53. The Dreaming #4 (DC)
54. Savage Dragon #30 (Image)
55. **Justice League: A Mids. Nightmare #1 (DC)**
56. Preacher Special: Saint of Killers #2 (DC)
57. Green Goblin #12 (Marvel)
58. Green Lantern #78 (DC)
59. WetWorks #19 (Image)
60. **Marvel Fanfare #1 (Marvel)**
61. Catwoman #37 (DC)
62. Preacher #17 (DC)
63. S. Wars: X-Wing R. S.—B.: Tat. #2 (D.H.)
64. The Flash #117 (DC)
65. Batman: L. of the D. Knight Annual #6 (DC)
66. 2099: World of Tomorrow #1 (Marvel)
67. Wonder Woman #113 (DC)
68. Azrael #21 (DC)
69. Grifter #1 (Image)
70. Spider-Man Team-Up #4 (Marvel)
71. Venom: The Hunger #2 (Marvel)
72. **Vampirella: Death & Destruction #1 (Harris)**
73. Untold Tales of Spider-Man #13 (Marvel)
74. Allegra #1 (Image)
75. Professor X and the X-Men #11 (Marvel)
76. **Superboy & The Ravers #1 (DC)**
77. Avengelyne #4 (Maximum)
78. Weapon Zero #6 (Image)
79. Iron Fist #1 (Marvel)
80. Flash Annual #9 (DC)
81. Birds of Prey: Manhunt #1 (DC)
82. Backlash #22 (Image)
83. Avengeblade #1 (Maximum)
84. **Superboy #31 (DC)**
85. Batman: GCPD #2 (DC)
86. Brass #1 (Image)
87. Cyberforce Annual #2 (Image)
88. X-Men: Earthfall (Marvel)
89. Artemis: Requiem #4 (DC)
90. Deathblow #0 (Image)
91. **Monkeyman & O'Brien #1 (D. Horse)**
92. Daredevil #356 (Marvel)
93. What If? #89 (Marvel)
94. Silver Surfer #120 (Marvel)
95. **Captain America: The Legend (Marvel)**
96. Impulse #17 (DC)
97. Hitman #5 (DC)
98. New Warriors #75 (Marvel)
99. Aquaman #24 (DC)
100. StormWatch #38 (Image)

## AT THE TOP:

While the "Onslaught" epic kept raging through the X-books (and order numbers kept rising, especially for titles like *Wolverine* and *X-Force*), *Kingdom Come* scored its highest ranking this month, even beating the first issue's #6 mark. Word-of-mouth about this major Elseworlds series must be working well in the nation's stores, and #1 and the underordered #2 should get even harder to find. As Marvel dominated the chart's top (with 16 out of the first 20), *Gen[13]* suffered a five-notch drop. The Spider-books are slowly climbing the market interest wall, as anticipation of "our" Peter Parker's return is getting folks to pick up the lead-in stories. Spidey's crossover with Backlash brought the Wild-Storm hero his best numbers yet.

## IN THE MIDDLE:

Supergirl gave DC one of its highest first-issue rankings for an ongoing series in months, thanks to fans' excitement about ex-Hulk collaborators Peter David and Gary Frank's reunion, and their increasing interest in this Superman supporting character. She even outscored all the other Superbooks! Chaos!'s *Purgatori* fared about as well as a Lady Death book, probably due to Jim Balent's drive-fans-nuts artwork. Shi's sales have been dropping, a result of Crusade's erratic shipping schedule. Once *X-Files* fanatics find out about *Season One*'s adaptations of the actual shows, the new title's numbers should jump from July's fair #48 showing.

## IN THE SECOND HALF:

The appearance of almost every single major DC superhero pushed *Justice League* to an order level it hasn't touched in a long while. *Marvel Fanfare*'s presentation of hot heroes like Captain America and Spider-Man in a 99-cent format should keep this returning series on a smoking path. An important new storyline coupled with Amanda Conner art and a Billy Tucci cover brought Vampirella back to Top 100 Land. Proof that readers still love teen teams, *Superboy and The Ravers #1* flew over the Kid's regular series. While *Monkeyman & O'Brien*'s making the chart evinces Legend creator Art Adams' popularity, Captain America's *Legend* book—one of three nostalgic one-shots celebrating Cap, Iron Man and Thor before their revamps—was the only one to join it, thanks to the fan fury his title's enjoyed this past year.

**ATTENTION COMIC BOOK RETAILERS:**

If you're a retailer who would like to participate in our compiling of the *Wizard* Top 100 (and be a candidate for special prizes), please write to us at the address below.

**Top 100 Coordinator**
**c/o Wizard Press**
**151 Wells Ave.**
**Congers, NY 10920-2064**
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THE GUIDE TO COMICS

# WIZARD®

## #63

## WITCHBLADE COVER!

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# CHARACTER PROFILE: The Dragon

BY MATTHEW BRADY

## VITAL STATS

REAL NAME: unknown
AGE: unknown
HEIGHT: 5'10" (top of head); 6'6" (top of fin)
WEIGHT: 450 lbs.
HAIR COLOR: None
EYE COLOR: Green
FIRST APPEARANCE: *Graphic Fantasy* #1 (fanzine published by Erik Larsen); in current form, *The Savage Dragon* #1 (mini-series)
TITLE CURRENTLY APPEARING IN: *The Savage Dragon*
MAJOR ENEMIES: Overlord (deceased), Cyberface, Horde, The Vicious Circle, the Fiend, Mako, Hellrazor, Cutthroat

## ORIGIN

Found naked in a burning vacant lot, the man who was to be known as the Dragon was an amnesiac who knew nothing of his life before he was discovered, why his skin is green or why in the world he has a fin on the top of his head. While recuperating in the hospital, he was named "Dragon" by his nurse, and became fast friends with Frank Darling, a lieutenant in the Chicago Police Department who discovered him in the vacant lot.

Darling was convinced that Dragon would be the perfect addition to the Chicago police force, which was rapidly becoming overwhelmed with the amount of crime committed by violent, often bizarre, superpowered beings called "freaks." Darling approached the Dragon about joining the police, and while he didn't join the force at first, Dragon was soon convinced that serving with the police would be in both his and the city's best interests. Graduating from the police academy with top honors, the Dragon joined the force, and became their primary weapon against the "freaks."

From his first day on the job, Dragon has proved himself to be an invaluable asset to the Chicago police, bringing in numerous superpowered freaks that had previously eluded the police. Seeing the effectiveness of Dragon, a movement was started to add other superpowered beings to the police force. Heroes were recruited from Chicago's freak population, including Barbaric, Rapture, Dart and Ricochet. However, these recruits found police standards too strict, and formed their own group, the Freak Force, which was independent of the police.

Chicago's freak criminal element was headed by Overlord, who fancied himself a modern Al Capone, and his gang, the Vicious Circle. In his initial battle with Overlord, Dragon's right hand was blown off, and he was impaled on the spire of a church. Dragon was able to pull himself free, and thanks to his remarkable regenerative ability, fully recovered.

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

One of Dragon's deadliest enemies over the years has proven to be the Fiend, a ghost-like freak who currently possesses the body of Mrs. Harris, a mother who blames Dragon for her daughter's death. Fueled by Harris' hate, the Fiend has attacked Dragon on more than one occasion, once breaking all his bones and hiding his body so his bones would heal improperly. With the assistance of Mighty Man, Dragon later fully recovered from the Fiend's attack.

Meanwhile, Cyberface, Overlord's former lieutenant, had turned states' evidence against Overlord in exchange for his freedom. Armed with a warrant based on Cyberface's charges, Dragon led an all-out attack on Overlord. In the end, Dragon killed Overlord, whose body then fell 60 stories to the ground below.

With the death of Overlord, Chicago's criminal element erupted into a full-fledged gang war, as more than 30 gangs of superpowered freaks tried to gain control of the Vicious Circle. With the help of Freak Force and other heroes, Dragon ended the gang war; however, by that time, Cyberface had assumed control of the Vicious Circle. Unknown to the members of the Vicious Circle, Cyberface has fallen under the mental control of the freak known as Horde—and the repercussions of this have yet to unfold.

Dragon's personal life has recently taken its turn of twists as well. While he lives with Rapture, Dragon is attracted to Alex Wilde, a female police officer. This personal crisis was brought to a head when Rapture asked Dragon to marry her. Not ready for such a change in his life, Dragon turned Rapture down, only to have Rapture reveal that she was pregnant, assumedly with Dragon's baby.

Despite his personal problems, the Dragon continues to fight the good fight in the Chicago Police Department.

## UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS

"There will be a bunch of team-ups coming up," says Savage Dragon creator, writer and artist Erik Larsen. "It seems that along with attracting the criminal freaks, Dragon also attracts other heroes as well. Dragon will team up with Spawn soon, and then meets God...literally." Other plans for the rest of the year include a Christmas team-up with Mike Mignola's Hellboy. "I have a real green and red theme going in that issue," Larsen admits. "The two will team up against Santa Claus. Merry Christmas."

Larsen promises that the wild adventures of the Dragon will carry on, "Just as soon as I make it up! I'm having a helluva good time, and I'm going to continue!"

## RECOMMENDED HIGHLIGHTS

"They're all damn good!" says Larsen with maniacal glee. "Each and every issue plays a vital role in the whole story, and you must buy them all! Or at least the trade paperbacks."

However, if you're one who likes to stick your toe in the pool before jumping in, try out these issues selected by the *Wizard* staff:

- ***The Savage Dragon* #7**—Dragon's first assault on Overlord. Told completely in splash pages, this story packs a visual and emotional punch.
- ***The Savage Dragon* #10**—Dragon proves he's the toughest guy in town when he goes up against Jimbo da Mighty Lobster! It's a battle royale as these two mix it up.
- ***The Savage Dragon* #27**—Dragon considers Rapture's marriage proposal. No fights. No muscle-bound hulking freaks. Just Dragon talking to his friends. A surprisingly good, sensitive issue.

## SIMILAR TASTES

If *The Savage Dragon* sounds groovy to you, Larsen suggests that you take a gander at the following books: *Madman Comics*, *Hellboy*, *Spawn* and *Nexus*. "They're all kind of wacky, and not quite your normal, conventional superheroes. Like *The Savage Dragon*, they're comics where you get to know the entire cast of characters as an ensemble, while focusing on one main character."

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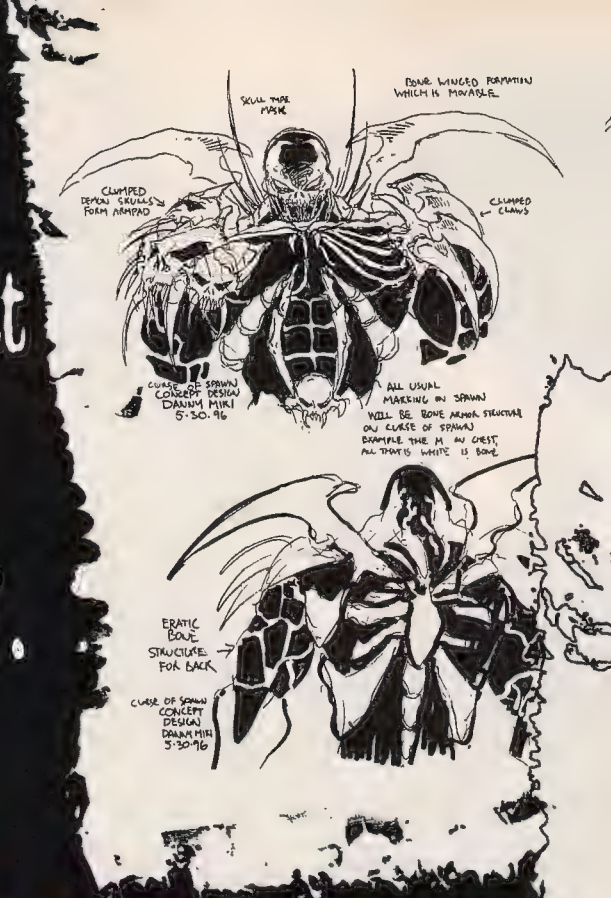
*Matthew Brady's life is also told completely in splash pages, packing a visual and emotional punch. Wotta life!*

An invocation of EVIL that spans time itself.

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# CBIQ

## COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

**HEY!** Hey! Once again, *Wizard* presents to you, for your mnemonic pleasure, the amazing, the stupendous, the awesome CBIQ. SEE the thought-provoking queries. MARVEL at the obscure multiple choice riddles. WONDER why you're reading this instead of the classic works of the Bard, William Shakespeare. Waitaminnit, I know why—this is in English. "Read on, MacDuff!"

**1. During the "Fire From Heaven" Image crossover story, what did Burnout from Gen[13] discover about himself?**

A) He found out that Lynch is his father.

B) He found out that he was indirectly responsible for the death of Caitlin's father.

C) He found out that his powers are actually the result of cybernetic implants and not genetic manipulation.

D) He found out that if you spell dog backwards, it spells God. Freaky, huh?

**2. Spider-Man once defeated in combat a former herald of Galactus. Who was this powerful peon?**

A) Silver Surfer

B) Firelord

C) Terrax

D) Nova II

**3. In the first issue of *Hitman*, what did Tommy Monaghan do after Batman punched him in the gut?**

A) He shot both of Batman's pointy ears off.

B) He wimped out and surrendered.

C) He called Batman "Bruce," because he saw the wealthy socialite's face when he used his X-ray vision.

D) He heaved partially digested curry all over the Dark Knight's boots.

**4. Which X-Man of 2099 left the group to lead those adorable mutant teenagers of X-Nation?**

A) Xi'an Chi Xan

B) Bloodhawk

C) Cerebra

D) Krystalin

**5. How did that Marvel speedster from the '40s, the Whizzer, get his speed powers?**

A) While mixing chemicals in his lab, Robert Frank was struck by a stray bolt of lightning.

B) He was exposed to a strange glowing meteorite.

C) After being bitten by a cobra, Robert Frank was injected with mongoose blood to cure him (Now that's science!). Frank was not only cured, but was also given the mongoose's speed.

D) After a beer drinking binge, Robert Frank sought to relieve himself. Unfortunately, the chain-link fence he urinated on was electrical, resulting in his becoming the Whizzer (and getting two, count 'em, *two* afros!).

**6. In the movie and the television show "Highlander," what's the only way you can kill one of those pesky immortals?**

A) Lightning from a storm has to hit them.

B) Their heads must be severed from their bodies.

C) They must have their hearts pierced by one of the Seven Silver Daggers of Carthage.

D) You must shove three garlics up an immortal's arse and sing Ozzy Osbourne's tune "No Bone Movies."

**7. The diabolical arch-nemesis of Bongo's comic book hero Radioactive Man is...**

A) Captain Squid.

B) The Rock Lobster.

C) Dr. Crab.

D) Ku Klux Klam.

**8. Soon after the Wonder-Twins appeared in *Extreme Justice*, the Legion of Doom showed up. Who was the leader of that band of rapscallions?**

A) Gorilla Grodd

B) Brainwave

C) Black Manta

D) Felipe, the loose-boweled janitor of doom

**9. Where did Katarina, the medieval Witchblade babe, find that groovy-looking glove-sword thingy?**

A) at the magical entrance to the Otherworld of Faerie

B) in the castle lair of the evil warlord Cardinale

C) in a cave protected by the white dragon of Absalon

D) in a big pile of crap

**10. Which of the following superpowered teams did Marvel's Sandman *not* belong to?**

A) the Sinister Syndicate

B) the Outlaws

C) the Wild Pack

D) the Avengers

**11. Supergirl recently took this away from Superboy, telling him he is not fit to have it:**

A) his sunglasses.

B) his cool leather jacket.

C) his S-Shield.

D) li'l Superboy.

**12. Shaft recently cheated on his girlfriend with:**

A) Riptide.

B) Glory.

C) Vogue.

D) Badrock (now they call him "Mine Shaft").

**13. When Black Bolt recently went bonkers and attacked the Fantastic Four (again), what was his excuse this time?**

A) Earth's pollution caused a chemical imbalance in his body, making him much more aggressive.

B) His brother, Maximus the Mad, used a device to control BB's brain and forced him to attack the FF.

C) Because BB can't speak, the FF misconstrued his gestures about an emergency as an attack and went into their "misread the situation and kick arse" mode.

D) BB's fork thing on his forehead got bent and caused his perception to go kattywampas.

**14. What did Alal the Destroyer send Ghost to retrieve from that scary Hellboy?**

A) the stone hand of Hellboy

B) the Tome of St. Jude

C) Hellboy's soul trapped in an Etruscan wine vase

D) the runestone of Middleton Essex

**15. In *Kingdom Come*, what caused Superman to leave the superhero biz?**

A) When Supes failed to save the president's life, he was so shook up that he felt it was time to retire.

B) With his superpowers waning, Supes retired feeling he could no longer physically handle it.

C) Disenchanted with the new bloodthirsty style of heroes, he quit when one of them killed the Joker.

D) He retired to devote more time to his relationship with his wife Lois Lane, who was feeling neglected.

**16. What do Image's Star and X-Men's Dazzler and Lila Cheney have in common?**

A) All are mutants.

B) All rely on high-tech weapons in battle.

C) All three are rock musicians.

D) They're all women.

**17. Which bad guy is the newest member of X-Factor?**

A) Sabretooth

B) Wendigo

C) Exodus

D) Dave

**18. What are the names of Barry Allen's children, who live in the 30th century?**

A) Peter and Patty

B) Don and Dawn

C) Bill and Betty

D) Barry and Allen

**19. When Shi and Grifter joined forces, what catastrophic event were they trying to prevent the evil Minister Omura from committing?**

A) the explosion of a nuclear device on an American aircraft carrier

B) an elaborate scheme to initiate World War III

C) the buyout of 11 of large U.S. corporations

D) the infection of the NORAD computers with a system-crashing virus

**20. How did the first Doom Patrol meet their demise?**

A) While battling an alien armada, they detonated an antimatter pulse bomb, not only destroying the armada but killing themselves.

B) They willingly let themselves be killed by the Brotherhood of Evil to save a small town in Maine.

C) The radiation that gave Negative Man his powers slowly killed him and the other Patrollers due to its carcinogenic effect.

D) The book's creators focused more on movie, cartoon and toy deals than the fans of the book and the book itself, slowly sending its sales into a downward spiral, after which it was eventually canned. Oh, wait—that's what's going on in today's comics.

THIS MONTH WE'RE RATING YOUR COMIC BOOK KNOWLEDGE AGAINST SOME HEAVILY CONTRIVED AND FORCED SUPERHERO NAMES THAT HAVEN'T BEEN USED YET (OR AT LEAST OF THIS WRITING). THE HIGHER YOUR SCORE, THE MORE DESPERATE THE CHARACTER NAMES (AND THE MORE FONDLY WE LOOK UPON CHARACTERS LIKE "MR. TERRIFIC"). THE ANSWERS'RE IN THIS MONTH'S "BULLPEN."

| SCORE | RANK |
|---|---|
| 0-4 | **Two-Fister:** Don't agree to be this guy's sidekick, no matter what the pay. |
| 5-14 | **Double-Dipper:** Did he get his superpower by dunking the chip in the dip after he took a bite of it? Yeah, keep telling yourself that. |
| 15-19 | **Wet-Nap:** Rude or not, never shake this guy's hand. |
| 20 | **Dave:** After all the nouns and verbs, in every combination imaginable, are all used up, we're looking at some pretty pathetic superhero names. Look for Dave, Phil, Bob, Eugene and Susan to head up the Avengers sometime in the near future. |

# wizard's

# comic-crammed crossword puzzle

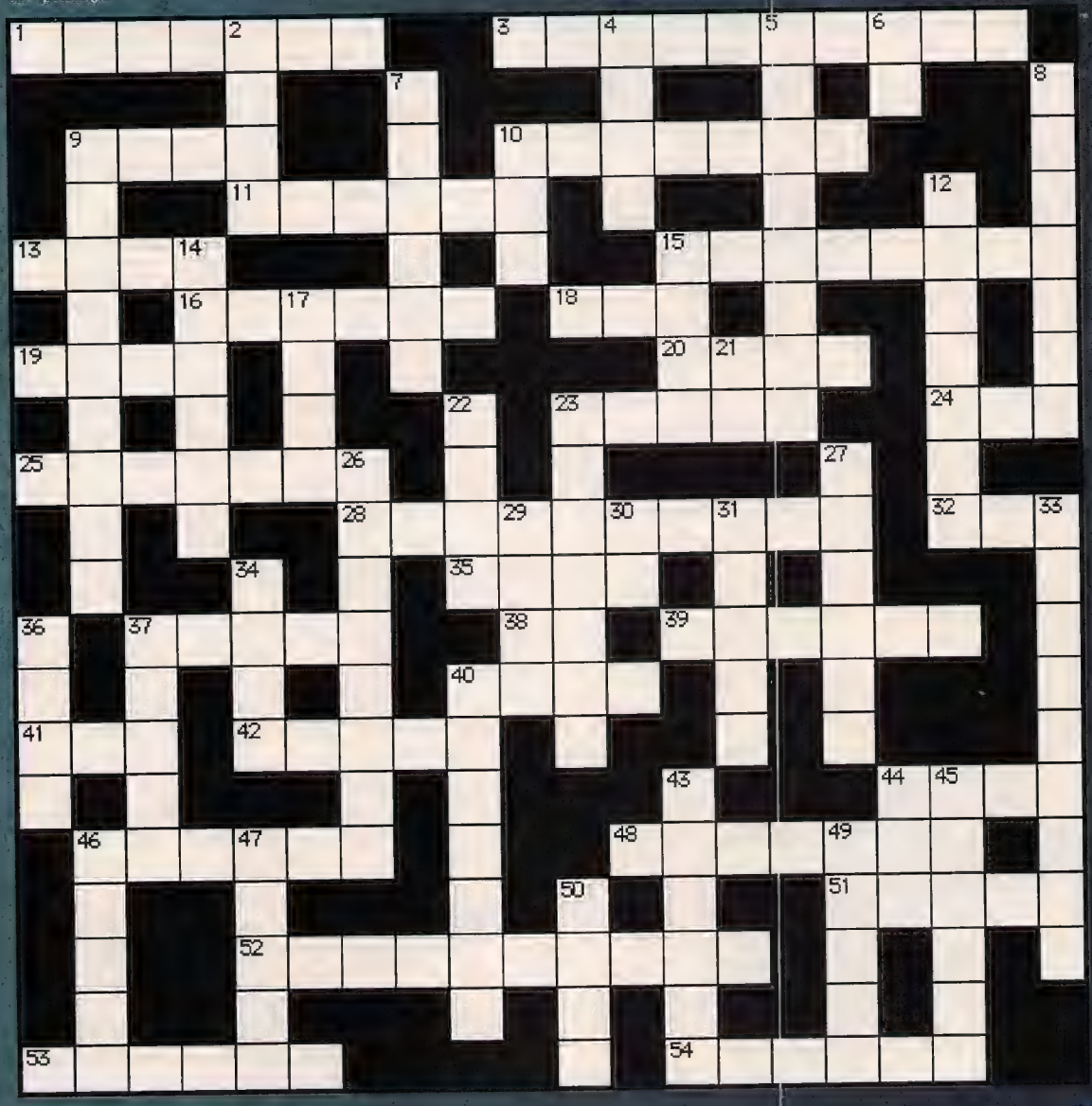
Test your comic book knowledge in our very own homemade crossword puzzle! The answers can be found in this month's "Bullpen."

**Across**

1. Hobie Brown
3. Det. Sara Pezzini
9. Abel's brother
10. Areala's furry ally
11. Spanish sword-carrying mutant
13. Mischievous Simpson
15. Angela's boss
16. Bat-butler
18. First name of 41 across
19. Female Grendel; Christine ____
20. Can both blind and protect Supes
23. Man of the Atom
24. Batman show foe; King ____
25. Tuvok's ship
28. Hulk adjective
32. Spaceknight
35. One of Catwoman's main moves
37. Image skull breaker
38. *Sovereign Seven* artist; init.
39. Popeye's profession
40. Power Man: _____ for Hire
41. Japanese Bad Girl
42. Next Men creator
44. Power Girl had this in *Zero Hour*
46. Fox and Dana's series
48. "_____ Carnage"
51. New Mutant Magma's real name
52. Supercity
53. Main magnate of 52 across
54. Adamantium robot

**Down**

2. Superman's old flame
4. 14 down lives in this
5. The Living Bomburst
6. Iron Man; init.
7. "Fire From Heaven" bad guy
8. Lynch's son
9. 31 down's team
10. Justice League Europe mascot
12. Team 7 and WildC.A.T.s member
14. Lord of the Apes
15. Jubilee met X-Men here
17. Capt. America ally; _____ Spirit
21. Voice of J. Jonah Jameson; init.
22. Wild, Power or Six
23. Jim Corrigan
26. Mr. Fantastic
27. Green Lantern weakness
29. Batmobile, to Robin
30. Celebrating its 10th anniversary; init.
31. First Ghost Rider
33. Freak Force gender-bender
34. Tick villain's head
36. 12 down's last name
37. Doom Patrol leader
40. Nexus' surname
43. Prime's comic company
44. First Maxx's guise
45. Wonder Woman's tribe
46. He was Hulk before Banner was
47. Illyana's domain
49. Capt. Atom foe; _____ Force
50. Zealot's sisterhood



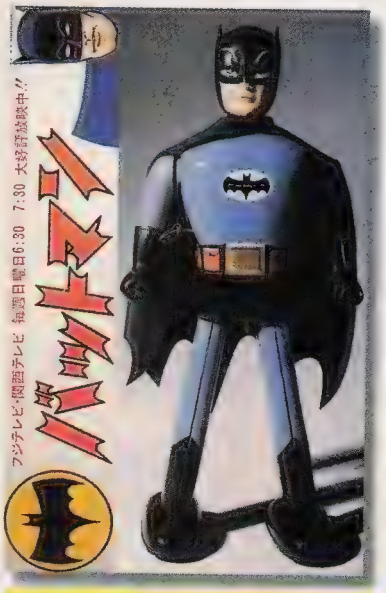
# JUNK DRAWER

**Little bits of everything in the world of comic-related merchandise**

by David Borak and the *Wizard* staff

## PUT THE SEAT DOWN!

If there's one thing we can't get enough of, it's bathroom humor. Well, you can now hang "Robert Crumb's Tommy Toilet Metal Poster" in your favorite bathroom! Available from Kitchen Sink Press in September for $15, Tommy Toilet not only keeps you laughing when you're on the john, but he's educational as well, providing helpful reminders on bathroom etiquette. The poster comes on heavy gauge steel with rolled edges and pre-drilled holes for hanging, and ships shrink-wrapped on cardboard.



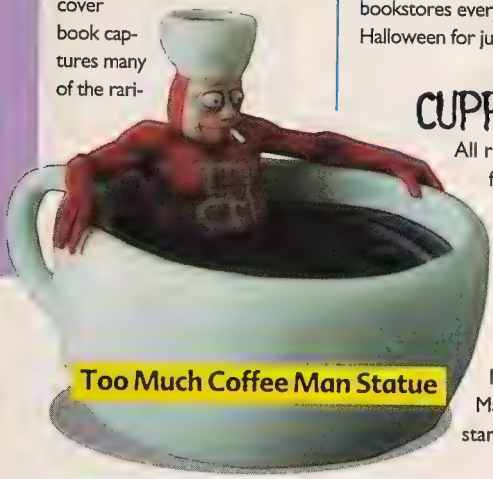

A page from "Batman Collected"

## HOLY BAT-MERCHANDISING

"Batman Collected," by Chip Kidd with photographs by Geoff Spear, provides a glimpse into some of the wackiest Bat-memorabilia from the past five decades. This 276-page hardcover book captures many of the rarities that've never been exhibited or photographed. Kidd has used his own collection, as well DC Comics' archives and collections from the late Andy Warhol and other notable fans, to bring you the unusual and bizarre in Batman collectibles. Containing 400 color photographs and a new Batman paper toy, it's due to hit bookstores everywhere this Halloween for just $50.

## CUPPA JOE?

All right! Your favorite Adhesive Comics character comes to life in this handcrafted, fully painted Too Much Coffee Man statue standing some 6-1/2 inches high and 8 inches wide! You can order this addicting centerpiece by sending a check or money order for $150 payable to Brian Claus at Alternative Studios, 119 Kildare Road, Garden City, NY 11530-2501. (Don't forget to add 8.5% sales tax if you live in N.Y.) For more info, e-mail Brian at BKClaus@aol.com.



Too Much Coffee Man Statue

## BIG MUGS!

For those of you needing a nice big mug for downing brewskies (*root* beers, of course), Chaos! Comics brings you the Lady Death Glass Mug. Each 12 oz. mug measures 5 1/2-inches tall, with a 6-inch wide, multi-colored Lady Death imprint by Steven Hughes. Great for the kids and only $7.95.

And if you're worried about making nasty rings on your coffee table, just pick up the Chaos! Comics Drink Coaster set. Each 12 coaster set contains three sets of four different designs featuring Lady Death, Evil Ernie, Smiley and Li'l Evil. The coaster set is available for only $5.95 and will ship alongside the mug in September.

Lady Death Mug

## DANGEROUS CURVES

In celebration of 25 years of that lusty vampire, Harris Comics presents the Vampirella 25th Anniversary statue. Based on a new Frank Frazetta painting of Vampi, the statue is sculpted by Sean Nagle, who's also crafted statues for Ash, Zen, Hellboy, Boba Fett and more. You can gaze longingly at this fully painted cold-cast statue for only $189. Limited to only 5,000 copies, Vampi ships in October.

## HOW MUCH FOR YOUR DAD?

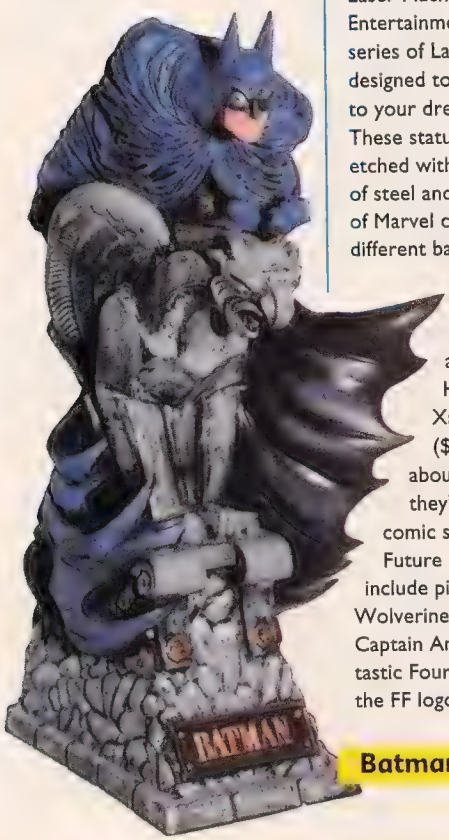
If you've enjoyed *Sandman* and *Violent Cases*, keep an eye out for a new hardcover by Neil

Vampirella Statue

Gaiman and Dave McKean entitled, *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish*. This 80-page graphic novel features McKean's full-color illustrations accompanying Gaiman's biting wit. It tells the story of a young boy who learns the perils of bargaining. (You think he'd at least get a puppy or something. What kinda pathetic dad did this kid have, anyway?) Available from White Wolf Publishing in October, this hardcover goes for $21.99.

## BATMAN AND SANDMAN REDUX!

Not enough space on your shelf for a regular-sized DC Comics statue? DC begins a limited-edition series of fully painted reproductions of its classic statues that are just half the size of the originals. Each is offered one-time only, numbered to 3,000 pieces and priced at $74. The first in the series is the Batman Miniature Statue featuring Bats perched menacingly on a gargoyle (from the original Randy Bowen design), and the second is the Sandman Miniature Statue (also a Bowen original). Both arrive in stores in September.




Batman Statue

## MARVEL METAL

Laser Mach and Marvel Entertainment bring you a series of Laser Sculptures designed to add a little style to your dreary shelves. These statues, cut and etched with a laser, are made of steel and feature a variety of Marvel characters with different backgrounds. The first two of 10 pieces feature Spider-Man ($40) and an X-Men Pen Holder with an Xavier's School "X" ($30). Limited to about 1000 pieces, they're available in comic shops everywhere. Future Laser Sculptures include pieces based on Wolverine, Carnage, Venom, Captain America and a Fantastic Four Pen Holder (with the FF logo).

# Product of the Month

## A COLD (CAST) DARK KNIGHT

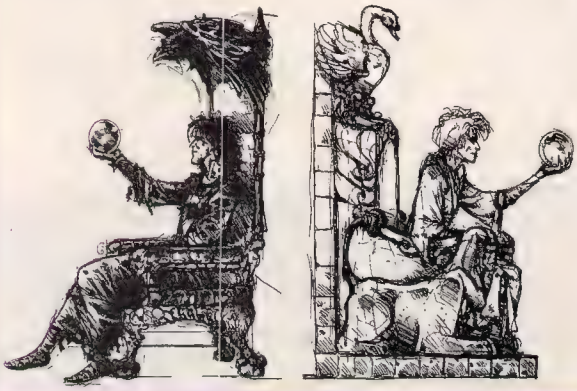
DC Comics is all set to release the Batman: The Dark Knight Returns statue—arriving in stores in November to honor the 10th anniversary celebration of Frank Miller's definitive kick-ass Batman series. The statue features Miller's Batman on a round base, with a nifty Carrie Kelly Robin aiming her sling-shot. Based on a new design by Miller, the cold-cast, fully painted porcelain statue is sculpted by William Paquet (DC's Swamp Thing) and will be produced to order at $195 each.

Also keep an eye out for the *Dark Knight Returns* signed and numbered slipcase edition (limited to 10,000 copies). With new cover art by Miller, this 224-page hardcover features all sorts of special goodies bound in for your reading pleasure—all for $100. Plus, there's several *Dark Knight Returns* posters and an all-new Dark Knight T-shirt featuring art from the hardcover. All these bad boys hit the shelves in October!

# BONUS!

## Dreamy Bookends

That ultra-busy William Paquet (Swamp Thing, Dark Knight) is all set to sculpt bookends based on Morpheus and Daniel from DC's *Sandman* series. Based on these original drawings from Michael Zulli, this pair will ship in early December for $275. We'll getcha the real pictures as soon as they're available!



**HEY!** Are you a company producing some really nifty comic-related merchandise like X-Men commemorative bathroom plungers, Star Trek hair wax or Batman 10W40 premium motor oil? We I, if you do, we'd love to include 'em in our groovy "Junk Drawer" section. (Of course, we'd also like sculptures, novels, T-shirts, games, magnets, buttons, etc.) Please send all info and samples to:

**Junk Drawer**
**151 Wells Ave.**
**Congers, NY 10920**

JUNK DRAWER video games

by Steve Brown

# DC Comics: A Video Game Guide

Since comic characters are no strangers to games, *Wizard* decided to take a good hard look at all the comic-based video games throughout history. Due to space constraints, though, we've limited our scope this month to cartridge-based games starring DC characters. And would you believe that over 38 different games have been released since 1979, and Batman and Superman starred in almost all of 'em? Go figure.

## Batman

Ironically, the most prolific hero in the video game world has been involved with the weakest games. Batman games have sold the best, but gameplay has always been consistently sub-par. Sadly, all Bat-games are movie or TV tie-ins, limiting the games to the plotlines of their source material.

It all started in 1989 with the release of the merchandising movie giant, "Batman." Sunsoft made millions with releases of 8-bit NES, Genesis and Game Boy versions of the movie-based side-scrolling game, which features one of the first "final fight" end bosses—pitting Batman against the Joker. Next, Sunsoft released *Batman 2: Return of the Joker*, the weakest game of the entire series. Sunsoft knew it couldn't afford the license fee for "Batman Returns," so it quickly pumped out *Return of the Joker* just before its agreement with Warner Bros. expired. Basically, this game just re-hashes *Batman*, but with different weapons and power-ups.

Konami later won the rights to "Batman Returns" and since 1993 was the year of the side-scrolling action/adventure game, all five platform versions offered the same punch-and-kick game with Batman taking on end-bosses Penguin and Catwoman on the streets of Gotham. Late in 1993, a juiced-up version was released for the soon-to-be-doomed Sega CD system. That version was a top seller for the Sega CD, even though a lame Batmobile race at the beginning was the only new feature.

Konami created the best Bat-game yet with *The Adventures of Batman and Robin*, a take-off of the animated series, available only on the SNES. A computer chip shortage at the time limited production, making it the hardest and most expensive Bat-game to find. Besides sporting fantastic graphics and innovative gameplay, this one featured all the classic villains as end bosses: Joker, Scarecrow, Poison Ivy, Catwoman, Penguin and Clayface. With the release of "Batman Forever" in 1995, the Batman license was split into two, one for the movie and one for the animated series. Acclaim won the movie rights and Sega grabbed the animated. Unfortunately, Acclaim lost millions on *Batman Forever* when the video game market almost collapsed in response to the coming 32-bit machines. It also didn't help that the actual game was a cheapjack fighting game (like any *Street Fighter* clone) with muddy rendered graphics...yawn.

Sega released a Game Gear and Genesis version of the animated TV show in 1995. The Genesis version, while not a bad game, pales in comparison to the earlier SNES version. Sega's version center around Mr. Freeze and his plot to freeze Gotham City. (Hmm...could this have been a prelude to the fourth "Batman" flick?)

Batman Forever

## Superman

Even though Superman beat ol' Bats to the video game scene by nearly 10 years, he's only got seven games in his video library. In 1979, Atari (Yaaaay!) released a very quirky and fun game. With plenty o' goons, Lex Luthor, Lois Lane, a phone booth and tons o' Kryptonite, the Atari 2600 *Superman* was the prototype side-scroller and became quite popular.

It wasn't until 1988, when Kemco released its *Superman* game for the 8-bit NES system, that comic book fans' appetites were whetted with a very difficult side-scroller in which Superman takes on Lex Luthor and his thugs.

In 1992, Sunsoft purchased the rights to Superman and released another poor-selling (but kinda interesting) game for Genesis. The plot centered around Superman trying to save Metropolis from Brainiac and his cohorts: Mr. Mxyzptlk, Metallo and the Prankster. A graphically superior SNES version was later released.

Later, *The Death and Return of Superman* video game for SNES staved off Sunsoft's imminent bankruptcy. Acclaim later absorbed the company and distributed any remaining titles. An identical SNES version was released nearly one year later (that crazy chip shortage).

JLA Task Force

## Justice League

The Justice League of America were a natural for the fighting game genre and in 1994, Sunsoft had *JLA Task Force* programmed and ready to release. There was one slight problem: they had no money left to manufacture the game. So Acclaim stepped in and distributed *JLA Task Force* for Genesis. The SNES version was released almost a year later. This minor hit featured Superman, Batman, Aquaman, Flash, Green Arrow, Darkseid, Cheetah, Despero and more as you fought one-on-one with your fellow heroes or one o' the baddies.

## Lobo

*Lobo*, a lameass fighting game with rotten controls, was released in 1996 for SNES and Genesis by Ocean and has already won worst game of 1996 (in the author's humble opinion, of course). Ocean lost huge and cut its losses by putting out very few copies. *Lobo* is still too new to pick up for any bargain price, so expect to pay close to retail ($40-$50), at least for a little while.

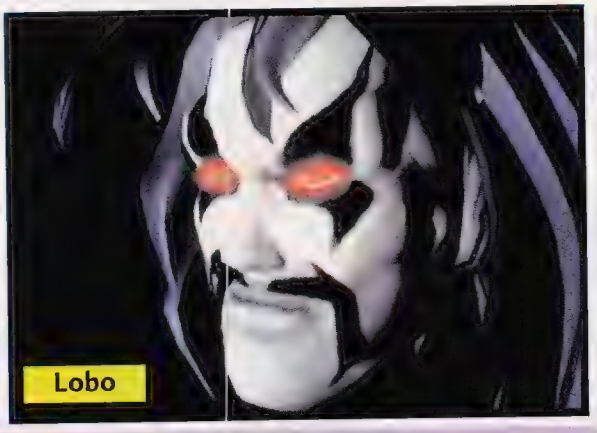
## Swamp Thing

One of the oddest of the DC oddball releases, *Swamp Thing* for Game Boy (possibly Genesis as well, although unconfirmed) is a fairly scarce game to find. There's also some question whether the Genesis and SNES versions were ever released to anyone other than video game magazines. (If anyone's got a copy of the Genesis version of *Swamp Thing*, we'll trade some great issues of Marvel's New Universe titles for it!) The 8-bit NES *Swamp Thing* game is truly pathetic and makes little sense. It seems to be a stock game (which denotes unused game material that the designers merely drop a character into), re-titled to take advantage of the then-popular TV series. Basically, Swampy takes on Arcane and his Un-Men in this one.

## The Flash

In 1991, *Flash* made his debut on the Game Boy, through an adaptation of the short-lived TV series. It's a very playable game and one of Game Boy's best as the Scarlet Speedster tries to save Central City from the Trickster and Mirror Master while fighting the usual nameless goons.

Hope you've enjoyed this stroll down video game memory lane. Check out *Wizard* #63, where we'll serve up all the greatest Marvel Comics-based video games!


Lobo

# PLUG IN

## The Latest in Video Game News

### ULTRA 64 NO MORE

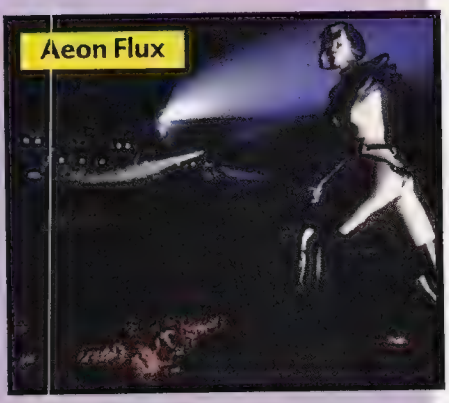
Nintendo has officially changed the name of its new 64-bit machine to the Nintendo 64. N64 *should* be out by the time you read this (Yeah, we've heard that before), but good luck finding one at retail. Nintendo is severely allocating the unit and expects a major hardware shortage until November. The lack of systems will push the retail up over the $200-$250 suggested retail price. Expect to pay over $300 if you want to own one before Christmas.

### AEON FLUX IS HERE

*Aeon Flux*, MTV's dangerously erotic bride, is outwardly beautiful, yet long dead inside. Shipping for all platforms late September, this Viacom game sports a *DOOM*-style plot with side-scrolling action based on the cult-hit animated series. This time, Aeon's got to capture the supernatural Demiurge while navigating over 35 real-time 3-D levels.

### PUNISHER/GHOST RIDER DOA

The Crystal Dynamics deal that gave the *Punisher and Ghost Rider* life has since fizzled out. Inside sources say that due to the company's impending restructuring (read: they don't got no money), the rights to the "Marvel Edge" characters are back on the market. Included in the "Edge" package are the rights to the muck-encrusted Man-Thing, which is sure to be the focal point of future negotiations.


Aeon Flux

—SB

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# bullpen

## Bad Idea

They'll all be dead in three months.

Y'see, Wizardites Pat McCallum, Andrew Kardon, Brian Cunningham and Mike Fasolo, all of whom work together here at the sparsely furnished Wizard Press, went and rented a house to call "home." So...have any of them been found on the front lawn naked, bloated and impaled on lawn darts? Oddly enough, no. Even though they work together all day and then end up in the same house at night, no one has gone postal and killed his roommates. That hasn't stopped the rest of the Wizard staff from forming a pool on who'll be the first to snap and slaughter his cohabitants. Odds-on favorite is for Brian to visit his roomies at night with a sawed-off shotgun. Why? Wizard staffer Jim McLauchlin summed it up best: "Definitely Brian. Mike's so laid-back he's practically in a coma, Andrew would just retreat into EZ-Cheese and Pat would just take a meaty fist upside their noggins and keep them in check. Brian's the loose cannon. He's the guy who'll come in to work one morning alone, covered in blood and giggling like a schoolgirl."

We'll run the obits next month.

## We're Thieves! Thieves!

We're going to Hell.

It all started this past July 4th when the annual San Diego Comic Con rolled around yet again. A Wizard Strike Team (Brian Cunningham, Scott Gramling, Andrew Kardon, Scott Beatty, Buddy Scalera and Jim McLauchlin) was assembled and shipped as freight to sunny California to meet the fans, B.S. with other companies and see how much we could drink before being pronounced dead. Aside from the usual, blurrily remembered chaos that normally occurs during these outings, the highlight of the trip was Scott Gramling's odyssey that started with eating a two-day-old leftover cheese platter (from the Chromium Graphics party), which led to sneaking into Jim Lee's hotel suite (while Jim was off playing poker), slipping into the artist's hot tub in his Winnipeg Jets boxers, seeing Buddy in red bikini briefs and failing to score with a spokesmodel. The adventure wrapped up with Scott emptying a hotel mini-bar of beer and stealing Lee's bathrobe. "My only regret is that I ate all that cheese," a grimacing Gramling noted. "I can't crap."

## TOP TEN

**Top 10 ways "Star Wars" kicks ass over "Star Trek" (a rebuttal to *Wizard* #60's Top 10 ways "Star Trek" kicks ass over "Star Wars")**

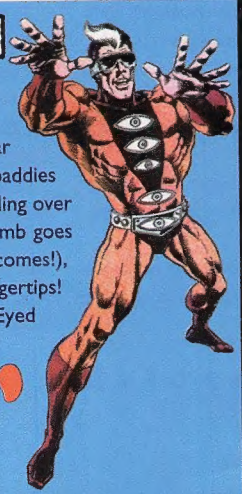
**10.** In "Star Wars," every planet they go to looks cool and has neat aliens. In "Star Trek," every planet looks like a blue-screened backlot and all the aliens are extras Gene Roddenberry slept with.
**9.** No lame-ass "Prime Directive" stopping you from whipping ass.
**8.** When ships get hit in "Star Wars," everyone rolls in the same direction.
**7.** Stormtroopers may not be able to hit the broadside of a barn, but they're still a lot more threatening than a spacefaring Abraham Lincoln.
**6.** In "Star Wars," all chicks are fair game. Heck, even your sister.
**5.** Han Solo never had to degrade himself by shooting a baggy-suited reptilian alien with a hollow log and some charcoal.
**4.** You can safely wear a red shirt in "Star Wars."
**3.** Luke Skywalker could kick Wesley Crusher's ass with one hand tied behind his back. Hell, Luke's cut-off hand could kick Wesley's ass with itself tied behind its back.
**2.** Kirk would have just used the Force to "get some."
**1.** Roddenberry=dead. Lucas=genius.

## MORT OF THE MONTH

### THE TEN-EYED MAN

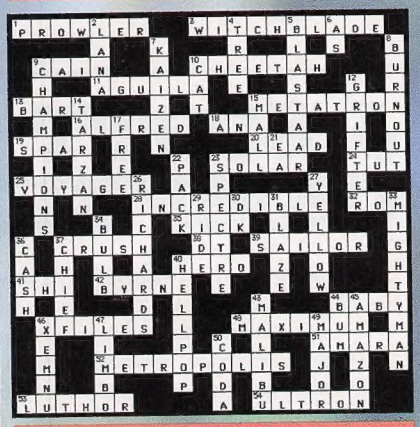
Brace yourselves. This starts off okay but gets really stupid. Here goes: Phil Reardon, after returning from 'Nam with a war wound, takes a job as a night watchman, comes across some baddies pulling a heist, gets knocked out, awakens to see Batman standing over him (we're almost to the stupid part...) and BOOM!, the bomb goes off. Coming to in a hospital blinded (Here it comes, here it comes!), Phil finds that the doctors connected his optic nerves to his fingertips! Blaming Bats for his condition, Phil dubbed himself the Ten-Eyed Man, lost repeatedly to Batman and was killed in *Crisis*.

**MORT-O-METER:**



## CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS

from page 189



## CONTEST WINNERS

**HIGHLAND MINT, ISSUE #56:** Ed Gockman, Huntley, Ill.
**MANGA, #56:** Michelle Ballert, Sonoma, Calif.
**WILDC.A.T.S, #56:** Oscar Barajas, Houston, Texas
**SPAWN HOMEMADE HERO, #57:** Jon Spry, Carterville, Mo.
(Check out his Malebolgia creation below!)

## C.B.I.Q. ANSWERS

from page 188

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. A | 6. B | 11. C | 16. C |
| 2. B | 7. C | 12. C | 17. A |
| 3. D | 8. B | 13. D | 18. B |
| 4. C | 9. D | 14. A | 19. A |
| 5. C | 10. A | 15. C | 20. B |

# WIZARD profile

Here's looking at...

# J. SCOTT CAMPBELL

Imagine getting a phone call from Jim Lee. He wants you to draw comics for his Image Comics studio. What would you say?

For J. Scott Campbell, the decision was a no-brainer.

"I said yes in a heartbeat," remembers Campbell, now the regular penciler on WildStorm's ultra-hot *Gen[13]* title. "For a comic fan, it's like getting a call from a movie star."

Like Lee of five years ago, the 23-year-old Campbell represents the next great wave of young artists. Call them the Brat Pack, if you will. Joe Madureira. Humberto Ramos. Steve Skroce. All influenced by the popular manga style of drawing. Young, talented and very successful.

Campbell seemed destined to be artistic early in life. Born in Michigan, but raised in Denver, Campbell's mom marveled as he constructed a complete 3-D model of the *USS Enterprise* out of tape, paper and scissors at age five.

His introduction to comics came with *X-Men Annual* #10. He was immediately hooked.

"I remember thinking that was the greatest artwork I had ever seen," Campbell says of the work by his major artistic influence, Art Adams.

But Campbell didn't immediately plunge into comics. Intrigued by animation, he was accepted into a handful of art and film schools. However, Campbell wanted nothing to do with the high cost of higher education. "I can understand going to school if you're going to be a doctor or lawyer, but with art, if you're good, you get hired."

Campbell spent a year in Denver doing freelance commercial art and using the time to hone his artistic skills.

In 1993, he set a self-imposed deadline that at the end of six months, he would be working in comic books. "I didn't think I would fail. I just felt I had something to contribute," said Campbell. "I was very confident and focused."

Campbell picked up *WildC.A.T.s* #2, which featured a prominent talent search ad. Tailoring his portfolio to WildStorm characters, he submitted his work. In 10 days, Lee called. Campbell started out with a few pin-ups in the *1994 WildStorm Swimsuit Special* and later, by doing *StormWatch* #0, completed his first full issue. Within six months, Campbell linked up with *Gen[13]*.

"I'm always going to have one foot in 'cartoony' land," says Campbell,, whose style is influenced by his animation background and manga. "I always loved exaggeration, cartoons and animation—both Japanese and Disney. It's just more of a fun way to express yourself."

Currently living with his new bride in Holland, Campbell can't wait to get back and tackle future projects like the *Gen[13]/Generation X* and *Batman/Gen[13]* crossovers.

"I'm really getting fired up," Campbell said excitedly. "As fun as it's been to draw *Gen[13]*, until I draw a classic character [like Batman], I won't feel like I'm *really* doing comics."

**by Matthew Senreich**

**First comic read...**
*X-Men Annual* #10

**Favorite book of all time...**
The same. To this day, I look at it and still get that childhood rush.

**Favorite work of your own...**
*Gen[13]* #3 (mini-series). I really felt I had made a jump artistically from the first two issues.

**Comics you read...**
*Impulse, Generation X*

**The one person you'd like to meet...**
Steven Spielberg

**Superpower you would most want...**
To stop time.

**Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....**
Honeycomb cereal

**Favorite toy as a kid and as an adult...**
I have this one toy, a transformer named "Jet Fire." It's pretty cool-looking 'cause it's got chunks of metal which many toys today don't have.

**Things you collect...**
CDs and laser discs.

**Person who would play you in a movie...**
My wife was telling me Nicholas Cage in "The Rock," but I'd probably say Christian Slater.

**Favorite cartoon...**
Anything by Tex Avery.

**People you would most like to work with...**
Steven Spielberg or Robert Rodriguez

**Favorite musical performer/group...**
U2

**Favorite TV show...**
"Seinfeld" or "The Simpsons"

**Last good movie you saw...**
"The Rock"

**Last good book you read...**
Howard Stern's *Private Parts*

**If you had the power of The Beyonder...**
I used to wish I could go back to the age of five and have the knowledge I have now, but now I don't know... W

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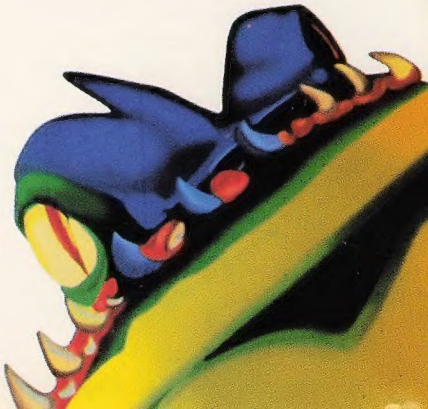
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